

Afghan rebels offer ceasefire

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AFP) — The Afghan factions fighting to remove President Burhanuddin Rabbani in a statement Wednesday they would observe a ceasefire from Thursday morning. The move is in response to a proposal made by a Kabul commanders' Shura council, which has "guaranteed" that Mr. Rabbani would resign and an interim government would be formed, the statement said. Burhanuddin Zia, a spokesman of Mr. Rabbani's Jamiat-e-Islami faction here, dismissed the statement issued by the local office of Afghan Premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami as "mere propaganda." The statement was issued on behalf of the so-called Supreme Coordination Council of the Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan, which groups Hezb-e-Islami, the Junbush movement of ex-communist General Abdul Rashid Dostum and some others. It warned that fighting would resume to deal a "final blow" if the Rabbani side "contravenes" the proposal of the Kabul commanders' council. The statement did not say who were the members of the Kabul commanders' shura.



Jordan Times

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جوردان تايمز مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية - الراي

Iranian suspect wants name cleared

PARIS (R) — A former Iranian embassy interpreter suspected of involvement in a wave of bombings in Paris in 1985 has requested that his name be cleared so he could visit Europe, his lawyer said on Wednesday. Whid Gerdji, who was at the centre of a diplomatic crisis between Paris and Tehran that ended in 1988, would like to visit France and other European Union (EU) countries, in part to conduct import-export trade, lawyer Christopher Mitchell-Heggs said. "He wants to be able to come and go," said Mr. Mitchell-Heggs. He is trying to rehabilitate his reputation. "But the foreign ministry said Mr. Gerdji would be turned down if he requested a visa. "The presence of Mr. Gerdji would not be advisable," ministry spokesman Richard Duque said. Mr. Mitchell-Heggs said a request for the normalisation of his status would be addressed to French judicial authorities, not the foreign ministry. Mr. Gerdji is effectively barred from all other EU states, the lawyer added. Mr. Gerdji, suspected of involvement in the bombings in which 13 people died and about 300 were wounded, spent five months in 1987 held up in the Iranian embassy in Paris while police outside kept it under siege.

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U.S. sees King's visit as 'opportunity'

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The United States sees the upcoming visit to Washington by King Hussein as "another opportunity" to do several important things with regard to the Middle East peace. It will first enable Washington and Amman "to review the progress that's being made" in the Middle East talks thus far, State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said. It also will offer a chance "to examine again the dialogue between Jordan and Israel growing out of the framework that was agreed to on September 14," the spokesman asserted and will provide "an opportunity to get the King's thinking" with respect to the return to Washington next week of the peace delegations.

U.S. opens satellite projects for Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The United States has agreed to open up its space satellite projects to Israeli technology that was previously banned, the Israeli government said. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's office published a letter on Wednesday from U.S. President Bill Clinton stating the change in policy. "I am very pleased to inform you that I have decided that Israel should be permitted to participate, through export to the U.S. of equipment and technology, in U.S. commercial space launch vehicle ventures," Mr. Clinton said in the letter. "When we met in November, I reaffirmed to you my commitment to maintain and strengthen Israel's qualitative edge and to ensure that the risks being taken for peace were minimised," he said.

Pope names first envoy to Israel

VATICAN CITY (R) — Pope John Paul Wednesday named a 68-year-old archbishop with experience of the Middle East as the Vatican's first envoy to Israel. The appointment of Monsignor Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, announced in a Vatican statement, follows an historic accord between Israel and the Vatican last month which cleared the way for full diplomatic ties. Cordero Lanza, an Italian, will have the title of special representative pending a full exchange of ambassadors.

Iraqi dinar dives

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Iraqi currency fell to an all-time low Wednesday and consumer prices soared, amid growing discontent over the U.N.'s decision to maintain sanctions (see page 10). The dollar rose Wednesday to 170 dinars on the black market, from 162 on Tuesday, currency dealers said. They predicted further falls for the dinar in the coming days.

Fyodorov to stay

MOSCOW (AP) — Boris Fyodorov, the most important remaining reformer in President Boris Yeltsin's cabinet, will stay on as finance minister, the Interfax news agency reported Wednesday. Mr. Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin reached agreement on the makeup of the new cabinet after two days of talks in the Kremlin (see page 8). Reformers had feared that Mr. Fyodorov would be forced out, following the resignation of First Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar on Sunday.

Warrant issued for Harding's ex-husband

PORTLAND, Oregon (AFP) — Skater Tonya Harding's ex-husband Jeff Gillooly was charged with conspiring to attack rival Nancy Kerrigan, authorities said Wednesday. The announcement that a warrant had been issued for Mr. Gillooly's arrest came after Ms. Harding herself met for more than 10 hours with investigators. It also came shortly after Ms. Harding, who divorced Mr. Gillooly in August but reunited with him in October, said she was separating from him again (see page 9).

Israelis say Golan poll should not alarm Syria

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAELI officials scrambled Wednesday to try to allay Syrian worries and reportedly also American misgivings about Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's decision to submit a peace treaty with Syria to a referendum.

Cabinet Minister Yossi Sarid acknowledged that the unexpected announcement on the referendum could be misread in Damascus or Washington as an Israeli attempt to slow down the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. "I'm completely convinced that this was not the intention of the prime minister," Mr. Sarid, a member of the negotiating team with the Palestinians, told Israel Radio. "Mr. Rabin is the last person interested in causing trouble in the negotiations."

Israel has come under growing pressure to declare how far it is willing to withdraw from the Golan Heights after Syrian President Hafez Al Assad told President Bill Clinton in a weekend summit he was ready for normal, peaceful relations with Israel. "Negotiations with Syria could start off right now with the knowledge that a referendum would be necessary before signing this agreement. So the idea of a referendum should by no means disrupt the

Hrawi in Syria

LEBANESE leaders arrived Wednesday for talks with President Assad on the outcome of his weekend talks with President Clinton.

Lebanese President Elias Hrawi was accompanied by Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

Officials said Mr. Assad would brief the Lebanese leaders on the results of his talks with Mr. Clinton, particularly with regard to Israel's occupation of South Lebanon. Press reports in Beirut said the pro-Iranian group Hizbollah was planning to dispatch a delegation later Wednesday to meet with Syrian officials.

process," Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben-Ari said.

Mr. Rabin said on Tuesday a referendum should be held on any "territorial concessions" once a draft peace treaty was ready.

Syria says Israel has no right to hold a referendum on the Golan.

An Israeli government source speaking on condition of anonymity said: "If the majority of the people say no,

in a referendum the immediate result of this would be calling for early elections."

Syrian officials and state-run newspapers condemned the referendum proposal and said the move showed Israel was not interested in peace.

"It is very simple for any observer to see that the vote is a trick which Rabin stands behind while many others oppose it," the official daily Tishreen said.

"It has no objective but to avoid the requirements of peace which resulted from the Assad-Clinton summit."

"This move would enable the extremists in Israel to unify their ranks and rally their resources to direct their poisonous arrows against the peace process."

"The question which rises here is: Should the Rabin government be allowed to strike the peace process and not allow it to achieve peace?" Tishreen added.

Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said after returning home from Amman Tuesday night that according to international law Israel could not conduct a referendum on occupied territories.

"Such a referendum does not concern us because a country could not ask its people to

(Continued on page 5)

Israel, PLO seek high-level talks to end crossing deadlock

TABA, Egypt (Agencies) — Israeli and Palestinian autonomy negotiators said here Wednesday that only talks at a higher level would be able to break a deadlock over the control of border crossings.

A Palestinian delegate said, however, that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was proposing a "new approach" on security issues. Israel's response was expected later the same day, he said, declining to elaborate or be named.

The two sides said they could make some progress at their talks in Taba but control of border crossings would have to be resolved at a higher level.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat is set to meet Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Saturday in Oslo, according to one of his advisers.

"There are basic points on the border crossings over which we disagree with the

Palestinians," General Amnon Shahak, who heads the Israeli delegation, told reporters.

The Palestinians have insisted on two points, which the Israelis reject: The hoisting of the Palestinian flag on the King Hussein Bridge linking the occupied West Bank to Jordan, and "administrative coordination" on the road from the Jericho area to the bridge, sources close to the talks said.

The deadlock has delayed the launch of Palestinian autonomy for Jericho and the Gaza Strip by more than a month.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath reported "new progress," however, in talks on transfer of administrative powers, notably regarding "registration of people and the issue of identity cards and visas."

But the handover of responsibility for water, one of the thorniest issues, had not yet

been raised, said Jamil Al Tarifi, who heads the Palestinian team for that committee.

The two sides failed to meet the Dec. 13 deadline for the start of an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, under the autonomy accord they signed in Washington on Sept. 13.

"Whatever progress is made in the negotiations on the transfer of civilian powers, it will be of no value so long as this problem has not been resolved," Palestinian negotiator Hassan Asfour warned about the border crossings.

"A settlement of this problem will mean a breakthrough for all the other issues linked to security," another Palestinian delegate said.

Gen. Shahak said the two sides were searching for a formula that would both answer Israeli concerns about security

(Continued on page 5)

Israelis kill two in occupied lands

RAMALLAH, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian throwing petrol bombs at a telephone exchange here Wednesday, while a demonstrator died a day after being wounded, Palestinian and military sources said.

Troops killed one Palestinian who lobbed three petrol bombs at the exchange in the West Bank town of Ramallah, and wounded another who was throwing stones outside the building.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Fanun, 20, died in hospital after being one of eight Palestinians wounded in clashes between troops and student mourners from the Islamic College in Hebron on Tuesday.

The students were mourning four members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) killed in a shootout with the army last week.

Tuesday's clash occurred when an army jeep mistakenly drove into the area of the wake for the four.

West Bank. Palestinians said all factions, including supporters and opponents of the peace agreement, called a two-day general strike in mourning for Faoun. Young men had forced all stores shut and there were scattered clashes with the Israeli army.

In the occupied Gaza Strip town of Rafah, an Israeli soldier was lightly wounded on Wednesday by Palestinians who threw a grenade at an army patrol, an army spokesman said.

In Gaza Strip, soldiers on Wednesday shot and wounded three Palestinian children throwing stones at them outside a school, Palestinian and army sources said.

The children were all aged under 13, Palestinian sources said.

A total of 1,172 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli gunfire since the intifada erupted in December 1987, according to an AFP toll.

Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip and West Bank launched an appeal Wednesday for funds to protect their homes and oppose the autonomy deal.

1 killed in Israeli raid near Beirut

NAAMEH, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli warplanes blasted a base held by a Palestinian group here Wednesday, killing a guerrilla and wounding another when a missile hit a clinic, a spokesman for the group said.

The missile struck two jets swooped on the base in the Naameh hills, between Beirut and the southern port of Sidon.

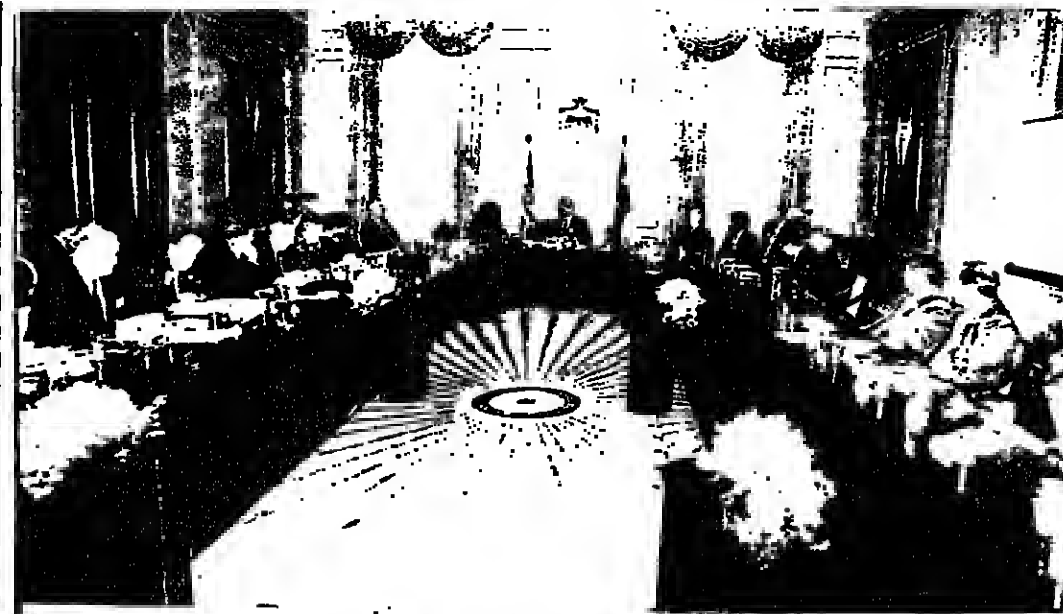
A spokesman for Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) said one of its members was killed and another seriously wounded.

He said the raid was in response "to our opposition to the Sept. 13 accord (for Palestinian autonomy) and support for continuing the intifada."

A military spokesman in Israel said the PFLP-GC used Naameh "for training and launching operations against Israel."

"The planes returned undamaged to base after hitting their targets," the spokesman said.

Local villagers said two people were evacuated from the base in a car.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday meets with a visiting U.S. congressional delegation (Petra photo)

Regent meets U.S. lawmakers, raises question of Aqaba siege

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday raised the question of the naval blockade on Aqaba with a visiting U.S. congressional delegation, noting that the siege was causing additional burdens on the Jordanian economy.

Speaking at a meeting held at the Royal Court with the group of eight congressmen who Wednesday concluded a two-day visit to Jordan in the course of a Middle Eastern tour, Prince Hassan presented a general review of the social, economic and political situation in the region in general and in Jordan in particular.

Among the main issues affecting Jordan's economic situation, he said, are the current water crisis, which is also affecting the other countries of the region, and the three waves of refugees which placed additional burdens on the economy.

The Regent said Jordan was seeking a comprehensive peace that would reflect positively on

the ground and the people living in this region.

Prince Hassan later received U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell, who arrived here Wednesday on a two-day visit as part of a tour of the region.

Prince Hassan exchanged views with the senator on the peace process and Jordan's efforts towards peace.

Mr. McConnell, a Republican from the state of Kentucky, earlier met with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan and reviewed the developments in the peace process and the siege on Aqaba.

Mr. McConnell also met with Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz on Jordan's development projects and the implementation of the economic restructuring programme. Dr. Fariz raised the question of the embargo on the international shipping operations in the Gulf of Aqaba and the country's external debts.

The group of eight congressmen had a meeting Wednesday

with the speakers and members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament.

Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi conveyed to the congressmen the Senate's condolences over the deaths caused by an earthquake in Los Angeles.

Mr. Lawzi reviewed Jordan's aspirations for a just and durable settlement in the Middle East.

The U.S. congressmen expressed hope that peace would be achieved in the Middle East. They said Sunday's meeting between Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton and the Jan. 21 talks between His Majesty King Hussein and Mr. Clinton would contribute to the efforts for peace.

The U.S. congressmen stressed the importance of strong U.S.-Jordanian relations and Jordan's contributions to the peace process.

Lower House Speaker Taher

(Continued on page 5)

Yemeni Rivals welcome accord

ADEN (Agencies) — Feuding parties to Yemen's ruling coalition Wednesday welcomed a reconciliation accord meant to end a six-month political crisis, but opposition figures remained largely sceptical.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC), united Yemen's largest party, pledged "full commitment" to the agreement signed Tuesday amid rising tensions between the two halves of Yemen that merged in 1990.

"The GPC will spare no effort to put the accord into effect and is extending its hand to the hands of all sincere peoples anxious for the country's unity," a party statement said.

It was signed in Aden by representatives of three parties in the ruling coalition, opposition parties and independents after weeks of talks on a future structure that would fully integrate formerly Marxist South Yemen with conservative North Yemen.

A growing rift between the two parts of Yemen emerged in July over differences between Mr. Saleh and his southern deputy Ali Salem Al Beedhi, who leads the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP).

It reached a new crisis point on Tuesday when the GPC charged that an Aden-based warplane had bombed a northern military camp. The YSP denied the claim.

Although opposition representatives signed the new accord, they doubted the ability and willingness of the coalition parties to implement it.

(Continued on page 5)

Deputies present draft law on women's status

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Wednesday referred to its Judiciary Committee a proposed draft law that would end what 15 deputies called discriminatory regulations against women in the 1969 passport law.

The proposed law, presented by Deputy Tawfiq Faisal and supported by 14 other legislators, calls for amending the 1969 legislation to give women the right to acquire passports without the approval of their husbands.

It also urges an end to identifying women in passports as the "wife, widow or divorcee" of their male (former) partners.

The deputies said the law should be amended to prevent two people of legal age from carrying the same passport,

restraining additional use of the passport to underage sons and daughters of the father or mother.

Ms. Faisal said the proposed amendments to the law were first presented to the House by over 400 people in 1984 and would aim at granting women their legal and constitutional rights.

The proposed law points out that passports do not indicate whether a man is married or not while women are only identified in relation to their marital status.

A proposed law for amending the 1964 Jordanian Nationality Law to give Jordanian nationality to children and foreign husbands of Jordanian women was also referred to the House's Judiciary Committee.

The 18 deputies who proposed the Nationality Law amendment say the present

law discriminates between men and women in that foreign wives of Jordanian men can have the Jordanian nationality while foreign husbands of Jordanian women cannot.

They also demanded that Jordanian women be able to give Jordanian nationality to their sons and daughters. The present law brings human suffering to children and their parents, they said.

"Children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians, especially those who carry Palestinian travel documents, are treated like foreigners after they are chased by security forces in order to expel them," said the deputies in their proposal to change the law.

Accordingly, they said, "women hide their children who are thus denied... human rights such as schooling."

During its session Wednesday, the House also referred to its Judiciary Committee a proposed law to amend the Civil Service Retirement Law and to its Administrative Committee it referred a number of requests made by deputies.

A number of deputies warned that they would officially question Minister of Education Khaled Al Omari over the diversion of funds from students contributions to the ministry's budget for purchasing cars for education directors.

Dr. Omari had explained in an answer to deputies' questions over the use of JD 500,000 of these contributions to purchase the cars that his ministry's action was legal and prompted by the lack of funds for purchasing the cars which

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U.S.-Jordan military panel meets next week

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A joint Jordanian-American committee on military cooperation will meet in Washington next week for the first time since 1989, informed sources said Wednesday.

They said the committee, co-chaired by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of Jordan and an assistant secretary of the U.S. Defence Department, will discuss a broad range of issues, including American military assistance programmes for the Kingdom, joint exercises and training for Jordanian servicemen.

Also discussed will be Jordan's military needs, including spare parts for American equipment already in use by the Kingdom's Armed Forces.

The sources noted that

next week's meeting, which will follow talks between His Majesty King Hussein and President Bill Clinton at the White House on Friday, would be the first after the 1990-91 Gulf crisis strained Amman-Washington relations.

Prior to the crisis, the commission used to meet annually in Washington or in Amman to work out the year's cooperation programmes.

Jordan depended on the U.S. for all its defence needs for nearly 30 years until 1987, when Congress turned down a \$1.6 billion arms package for the Kingdom, promoting Amman to turn to France and the Soviet Union to meet its requirements.

Washington maintained a minimum level of military assistance to Jordan throughout the years, including training programmes for Jordanian servicemen and joint

military exercises.

Following the Gulf war, the U.S. administration has released more than \$35 million in military aid to Jordan after overcoming congressional hurdles related to Jordan's adherence to and enforcement of the international sanctions against Iraq and overall Arab-Israeli peace-making.

The strain in bilateral ties resulting from the Gulf crisis was gradually mended after mid-1992. King Hussein met with President Clinton at the White House in June 1993, sealing reconciliation.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, who headed for Washington Tuesday to join the Jan. 21 White House meeting between the King and President Clinton, said that "Jordanian-American relations are continuously improving... after traces of the Gulf crisis were removed."

(Continued on page 5)

Middle East News

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, JANUARY 20-21, 1994

Egypt plans dialogue without Islamists

CAIRO (R) — The Egyptian government is preparing to offer political and economic reforms to rally secular opposition groups to its struggle against Islamic fundamentalism, political sources and diplomats said on Tuesday.

The forum for a deal is to be a "national dialogue" proposed last month by President Hosni Mubarak and now being organised for February.

Islamic groups — which range from the semi-tolerant Muslim Brotherhood to underground militants waging war on the state — are not invited.

Western diplomats say the government's main aim is to form an "anti-terrorist national front" which would draw the country's weak and divided secular opposition into alliance with the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) against the Islamists.

But opposition groups want a price for their support and the forum will be used to discuss changes in political and economic laws that could bring more democracy and ease restrictions on the economic system.

Islamists say the effort can not solve the country's prob-

lems and call for a broader debate which would give Muslim activists a voice in setting Egypt's future course.

Preparations for the "national dialogue" are being made by a government committee, which has begun consultations with opposition party leaders.

The committee is headed by Yousef Wali, who is deputy prime minister and head of the ruling party. The other members are Kamal Al Shazli, minister of the People's Assembly, and Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif.

The parties due to participate are the NDP, the Unionist Progressive Party, Al Wafd and the Socialist Labour Party, a leftist group which has had a tactical alliance with moderate Muslim fundamentalists.

Some influential political figures would also be invited to take part on their own account.

Egypt's constitutional laws have not been changed since the army overthrew King Farouk in 1952. The "national dialogue" will be the first such multi-party forum in the country's history.

Secular political parties were legalised in 1977 but the NDP, descendant of the sing-

le socialist party formed after the revolution, has won overwhelming majorities at all elections.

"The secular groups want genuine political reforms as their price to participate in the front," one Western diplomat said.

The biggest excluded group is the Muslim Brotherhood, which is officially banned but operates more or less openly and has strong influence in trade unions and professional bodies.

Also barred are the underground Al Gama'a Al Islamiya (the Islamic group) and Islamic Jihad (holy war) which have mounted attacks on public officials and foreign visitors, inflicting grave losses on the \$3 billion tourism trade.

The militants want to overthrow the secular state and bring Egypt under the rule of an Islamic caliphate.

The government has repeatedly vowed not to talk to the Islamists and sacked Interior Minister Mohammad Abdul Halim Musa last year for opening contacts.

"This dialogue will definitely not succeed," Mahmoud Al Hadebi, spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood, said on Tuesday.

"If a large portion of the people is not represented, how will this dialogue succeed? If they want a national dialogue then it is not fair to alienate any faction."

According to Muslim militant lawyer Abdul Halim Mandour, "this proposed dialogue is to see how to confront or uproot the Islamic groups or what they call 'terrorism'."

"What they want is not a dialogue with the Islamists but a dialogue to destroy them. We are stretching our hands to the state to have a dialogue but they are refusing to answer," he told Reuters.

"We have repeatedly announced that we are ready for dialogue to put an end to this cycle of bloody violence whether from the government or from the Gama'a. 'I am entrusted and willing to carry out this role to halt the violence by these youths, called Al Gama'a Al Islamiya, and the state. This violence does not benefit either side.'"

Mr. Mandour said the Gama'a has not been able to achieve its aim through violence. "It has not been able to expand arrests," he said.

Brown seeks 'credible control' of funds for PLO

By Nicolas B. Tatro
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — U.S. Committee Secretary Ron Brown said Tuesday a "credible mechanism" had to be set up to channel public and private aid to Palestinians once they have autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Brown said he would raise the issue when he meets later in the week with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who has been criticised by some Palestinians for wanting to personally control the purse strings on all international aid.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Brown said that charge had "some ring of validity to it" but he did not want to reach any conclusions until he had met with Palestinian leaders here Wednesday and Mr. Arafat in Cairo on Thursday.

"It would seem to me that we would have to do everything we can to increase the confidence level, the comfort level of both potential investors and donor countries," said Mr. Brown, noting that more than \$2.4 billion had been pledged by Western governments, including the United States.

"I would think a part of that would be having a mechanism in place that is credible and appears to have the confidence and atmosphere of the audience and comfort," he said.

Mr. Brown, who came here after visits to Saudi Arabia and Jordan, declined to give any details about what sort of controls should be placed on the PLO to ensure money was spent effectively.

"You want to have not so much that it keeps the process from moving because I do think speed is of the essence. The longer it takes the more you have cynicism and skepticism sneak into the process," he said.

"On the other hand, you need enough so that it is a credible mechanism that has integrity."

He said both the U.S. government's Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which has pledged \$100 million in guarantees to business invested in the rebuilding, and private investors would want "assurances."

Mr. Brown said Saudi Arabia's King Fahd had pledged \$100 million despite the fact that relations with the PLO were severely strained when Mr. Arafat backed Iraq in the Gulf war.

PLO officials have expressed irritation at Western demands for tight controls.

Hassan Abu Libdeh, a PLO official in Jerusalem, said the PLO has set up a mechanism for funneling aid and had 2,500 projects in their data base, some ready to start. Plans for dealing with aid would be presented to prospective donors later this month, he said.

"We've had enough of this pushing around from the international community," said Mr. Abu Libdeh.

Salah Abdul Shafi, head of the economic development group in the Gaza Strip, conceded there were "problems" about setting up a Palestinian institution to receive aid.

"We are aware of this. They do not need to continue reminding us. They are exaggerating in this," he said.

Still, many Palestinian businessmen are also concerned about whether aid will be administered by PLO factions, including the military.

Orhan Hallak, a businessman and publisher of the daily Al Nahar newspaper, said "a credible independent group" should decide where money should be spent and any misuse of funds should be exposed.

"So much money has been spent in the past 27 years, and we have nothing to show for it," he said. "We shouldn't blame it all on the Israelis. We did ourselves wrong, too."

Mr. Brown conceded that there were no firm commitments by private investors to start projects under the PLO-run authority to be set up in the Gaza Strip and Jericho once PLO and Israeli negotiators finalise details of self-rule.

But he said a \$2 billion to \$3 billion market would be created by the massive infrastructure needs of the Palestinians — such as roads, housing, telecommunications and power generation.

Mr. Brown said he hoped for "an American role" in the rebuilding effort and what was needed was a peaceful environment.

Many Somalis still live off the U.N. — by hook or crook

MOGADISHU (AP) — Before Somalia's civil war and famine, this country's nomads wandered through deserts and scrubland behind herds of camels, living off their milk.

Today, many nomads have a new milk: camel. The United Nations.

Consider what recently happened to a contingent of U.N. soldiers from Saudi Arabia. A group of Mogadishu's many bandits stole guns from one soldier and demanded \$4,000. When the soldiers refused to ransom the guns, the crooks stole one of their vans and demanded \$8,000.

When the Saudis said no again, the thieves repainted the van and rented it to workers at the huge U.N. complex.

The Saudis spotted the van days later and confiscated it. But they ended up paying a harsher price: The Saudis ambushed a Saudi convoy and shot and wounded a soldier.

The many law-abiding Somalis in Mogadishu also see the United Nations as their only source of money.

Dictator Mohammad Siad Barre maintained a bloated civil service and army for decades before his ouster in 1991. Many Somalis got in by declaring allegiance to him. Mr. Siad Barre also received much foreign aid by playing the United States and the Soviet Union against each other during the cold war.

Today, the U.N. complex, military airport and seaport are Mogadishu's top employer.

Crowds of jobseekers gather outside the complex in downtown Mogadishu, sometimes chucking rocks at one another to reduce the number of job applicants.

Others buy forged United Nations passes in nearby markets to enter the complex and gather information on forthcoming contracts.

Some of the money dealers in scruffy Bakarra market prosper by exchanging dollars into Somali shillings, so the United Nations can pay its thousands of employees each week.

Ever since the United Nations ended Somalia's famine, stopped trying to capture General Mohammad Farah Aided, and began reducing its troop strength, it has been encouraging rival clans to hold peace talks and trying to rebuild police forces and local governments.

But many Somalis feel they must keep milking the United Nations until it either helps create a new government and revives the economy, or throws up its hands in frustration and simply leaves the country.

"Many of these nomads and refugees have to drive vehicles for U.N. relief workers and defend them with rifles, or take the other option and rob them as bandits, because there is no government or military left in Somalia," said Abdikassim Salad Hasan.

Mr. Hasan, who served as Mr. Siad Barre's deputy prime minister and minister of interior, added in an interview, "The U.N. has completely failed to create a new government or business community with jobs for the people. I still believe the U.N. should remain here as the helper we need, but this tragedy will end only when all of Somalia's clan leaders get together and form their own government."

Many Somalis will meanwhile continue to view the U.N. complex as the Beverly Hills of Mogadishu.

The complex stands on the former site of the U.S. embassy filled with pre-fab offices and living quarters, tents, U.S. helicopters, a hamburger joint, the complex works hard to make its many soldiers feel like they are back home in the west.

Post exchanges inside sell TV sets, radios, CD players and imported beer. The U.N. setup even runs two armed forces radio stations with rock 'n' roll, country and western music, and live coverage.

Although the United Nations is considering pulling its headquarters out of unstable Mogadishu, it now is accepting bids from contractors to refurbish the tennis courts, swimming pool and miniature golf course — destroyed in the civil war.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Taratara
19:00 News in French
19:15 Renaissance
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Fresh and Bold
21:00 Dr. Beal's On
21:30 Faces and Places
22:00 News in English
22:30 Film "Empty Cradle"

PRAYER TIMES

06:10 Fajr
06:37 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:37 Asr
17:01 Maghrib
18:22 'Isha

CHURCHES

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Anglican Church Tel. 626851, Tel. 628437

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771334

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 623275

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195

The Church of Jesus Christ in Latter-Day Saints Tel. 624932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 624949

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

It will be sunny with temperatures above average and winds with south-easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm

Min. max. temp. 7-14

Aqaba 12-25

Deserts 4-21

Jordan Valley 13-24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Aqaba 22, Haratun readings: Amman 21 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hisham Karam 747246
Dr. Waleed Al-Masri 675485
Dr. Raif Abu Zuhair 842995
Dr. Muhammad Shajarat 626945
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 677055
Nan-sah pharmacy 623612
Al Salam pharmacy 626731
Yacoub pharmacy 624945
Shimani pharmacy 637691
Nabih pharmacy 842642

IRBID: Dr. Muhammad Al-Zuhair (—)

Al Qadi pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Farah Hamdan 957725

Khalid pharmacy 954517

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 630341

Rescue Police 192-621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891258

Blind Bank 775121

Highway Police 834302

Traffic Police 896301

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 695801

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (direct assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 774111

Central Amman Telephone 661111

Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661111

Jordan Television 731111

Radios Jordan 774111

Water Authority 661111

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381

RJ Flight Information 48-53301

Queen Alia Int. Airport 48-53301

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813012/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642406

Aklich Maternity, J. Amn. 642412

Jahid Maternity (J. Amn.) 642412

Madha, J. Amman 641141

Palestine Shmouni 641141

Shmouni Hospital 641141

University Hospital 848945

Al-Muham Hospital 662279

The Islamic, Abdali 661648

Al-Ahli, Abdali 661648

Italian, Al-Muharraq 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26

Arms, Marika 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 662249/50

Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 109983323

Zarqa National Hospital 109983323

The Sina Hospital 109983323

Al-Hikma Modern Hospital 109983323

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 012375555

Greek Catholic Hospital 012372725

Al-Natice Hospital 012374101

AGBAR:
Princess Lata Hospital 013314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 08053200-5, where it should always be verified

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:55 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

07:30 Aden (RJ)

07:30 Samarra (RJ)

07:30 New Delhi (RJ)

09:25 Aden (RJ)

09:30 Riyadh (RJ)

10:00 Beirut (RJ)

10:00 Colombo (RJ)

10:30 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

16:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

18:30 London, Berlin (RJ)

19:00 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

19:00 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)

19:55 Athens, Larissa (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:15 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

06:00 Beirut (RJ)

07:00 Aden (RJ)

11:00 Rome (RJ)

11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

11:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)

11:30 Athens (RJ)

11:30 Paris (RJ)

12:05 London (RJ)

20:45 Jeddah (RJ)

21:30 Bahrain, Dhaka (RJ)

21:30 Dubai, Moscow (RJ)

21:45 Cairo (RJ)

22:05 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45 Damascus, Paris (AF)

14:30 Beirut (ME)

17:45 Riyadh (SA)

18:30 Damascus (AZ)

20:55 Cairo (MS)

06:30 Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 4.00 a.m. every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5.00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7.30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5.00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in tils per kg.

Apple 750/800

Banana 600

Banana (Mukammal) 620

Cabbage 70/80

Carrot 100/110

Cauliflower 90/100

Cucumber 250/300

Cucumbers (large) 130/140

Cucumbers (small) 250/300

Eggplant 160/200

Garlic 90/100

Green Fruit 180/190

Green beans 450/500

Lemon 200/250

Marrow (large) 100/120

Marrow (small) 220/250

Olives (green) 700/800

Orange 300/350

Onion (dry) 200/250

Onion (green) 200/250

Pepper (hot) 200/250

Pepper (sweet) 200/250

Potato 200/250

Radish 120/130

Team to head to S. Africa to normalise relations

By Rana Sabbagh

AMMAN (R) — Jordan will send a top-level delegation to South Africa on Friday to announce the opening of an embassy in the country that it once treated as a pariah.

"South Africa is now out from isolation and has an important economic and political role to play in the whole of the African continent," said a senior Jordanian official.

Officials said the team would be headed by Senate Speaker Ahmed Al-Lawzi and would include the minister of planning, the minister of foreign affairs, key industrialists and traders.

The countries announced full diplomatic ties in September after more than a year of contacts, including a trip to Jordan in April by Foreign Minister Pk Botha and an exchange of letters between His Majesty King Hussein and President F.W. de Klerk.

South Africa, which long had secretive military links with Israel, opened its first embassy in the Arab World in Bahrain in November, fol-

lowed by a mission in Jordan last month.

"In a nutshell, it (the visit) is to give impetus to our relationship," Anthony Greenham, South Africa's charge d'affaires in Jordan, told Reuters.

"There are specific areas of exploration such as economic and scientific cooperation and educational exchanges," he added. Mr. Greenham was named in December to run the new South African embassy in Jordan until an ambassador is appointed.

"What I would like to see is to have the trade relationship between the two countries diversify to a much greater extent," he said.

Last year, the balance of trade was heavily in favour of South Africa, with Jordan importing \$40 million of steel and iron while selling goods worth only \$1.5 million.

South Africa, Mr. Greenham said, saw the Middle East as a target for significant growth in diversified trade and technological cooperation. It is slowly reestablishing

links with scores of countries that shunned the white government until President F.W. de Klerk undertook in 1990 to remove apartheid.

South Africa has set up South African interest offices — a first step towards diplomatic ties — in Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia.

The embassy in Amman might cover Syria and Iraq, although links with Iraq must wait until U.N. trade sanctions imposed on Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 are lifted.

"We recognise Iraq and the Iraqis as an extremely important player in the Arab World and we are looking forward to the time when we can get involved to the full extent possible," Mr. Greenham said.

He said South Africa might buy Jordanian potash but it was too early to talk of definite plans because it obtained most of its needs from America under special trade arrangements.

The Dead Sea mineral is one of Jordan's main foreign currency earners.

Heavy rains, snowstorms expected — meteorologist

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Meteorology Wednesday has forecast heavy rains and snowstorms in the Kingdom starting Saturday.

Department Director General Ali Abanda said that a low depression now formed over Algeria was moving swiftly towards the eastern Mediterranean region and was expected to affect Jordan and the rest of the countries in the region by Saturday.

Several cold fronts originating from the polar region are accompanying the depression which would cause heavy rains in all parts of the country with a noticeable drop in temperatures, said Dr. Abanda.

The high winds and rains are expected to last until Sunday when snow could be expected to fall on highlands of 1,200 metres, such as Ajloun in the north and the Sharah range of mountains in the South Dr.

Abanda added.

He said that the storm would taper off by late Monday, only to make way for another depression the next day with more cold fronts and more rain, due to the creation of an expected high depression over the European continent.

Referring to the rains this year, he said most of the precipitation over the last three months fell in the southern and eastern regions of the Kingdom.

In some of the southern regions rainfall exceeded the normal average there, but the northern and central parts received only 35 per cent of the annual average rainfall, according to Dr. Abanda.

With the coming rains and no frost, Dr. Abanda said, a good agricultural season, especially in the northern regions, can be expected.

20 large Canadian firms to participate in trade meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation consisting of businessmen of 20 internationally known Canadian companies from the Canada Arab Business Council will visit Jordan between Jan. 22-25.

Canadian Ambassador to Jordan Andrew Robinson Wednesday said the mission's principal objective is to initiate and pursue trade activities between the Canadian and Jordanian private sectors.

In addition, the mission will endeavour to identify and enhance opportunities for commercial and economic cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries in the wake of the peace process, according to an embassy statement.

"This mission presents an ideal occasion for the participating companies to explore commercial possibilities in the area with Jordanian private sector firms and jointly pursue opportunities created as a result of the peace process," Mr.

Robinson said.

The ambassador added that the mission demonstrates the continued strong interest of the Canadian government and the Canadian private sector in expanding economic relations with Jordan.

The mission includes representatives of companies specialising in electricity, engineering, telecommunications, forestry products and general trade.

The delegation will meet with ministers and senior government officials, the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, the Chamber of Commerce and representatives of the Jordanian business community.

The Jordan-Canada Business Council, which groups together the Canada-Arab Business Council and the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, was created and held its first meeting in Amman in January 1993.

Japan, Jordan sign evaluation of computer training centre project

AMMAN (J.T.) — A joint evaluation report on the Japanese technical cooperation for the project on Computer Technology Development and Training Centre at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) Wednesday was signed at RSS.

The project is currently being conducted by RSS in cooperation with the Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA).

Launched in mid-1990 the project aims at providing advanced training to Jordanians in the field of software, and consequently contributing to the socio-economic development process in the Kingdom.

It is also designed to secure an organised technology trans-

fer in the field of computers to Jordan in order to hold long and short-term training programmes for specialists in all Arab countries.

In this framework, two long-term training programmes have so far been held, namely senior programmer and system engineering in which several specialists from Arab countries took part.

This project contributed also to reinforcing and developing Jordanian efforts in the field of environmental protection through the use of computers.

The establishment of this centre will have significant impacts on industrial, educational, and university activities in

the Kingdom.

The report notes that Jordanian expertise in the field of computers have become capable of providing specialised technical consultations and services in this field as well as holding advanced seminars and training programmes.

The report recommends providing further technical aid to Jordan in the framework of this ambitious project, which will be completed in mid-1994.

The report was signed by Hani Mulki, secretary general of the Higher Council for Science and Technology and RSS president, and Kozo Esaki, head of the Japanese evaluation team.

The unique formula of 'Les Sax' quartet

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Adolphe Sax, the Belgian-born, French inventor of the saxophone could not have imagined a more original, innovative application of the instrument that has become the undisputed symbol of jazz music.

"Les Sax" the French saxophone quartet, make it very difficult to describe their show with written words. Through classical music, jazz, variety and breathtaking dancing, they have created a unique formula that leaves a definite impact on their audience.

Claude Kelogianian, Guy Rebreyend, Dany Auheri and Michel Oberli are four saxophone prodigies who have won numerous, prestigious prizes and awards.

They move quite comfortably from Bach to Jazz, from film soundtracks to familiar melodies. Subtle choreographies, wit, and a good sense of humour contribute to making a movie-like performance with exquisite fidelity, slow motion and amazing accelerations. Never a dull moment.

The participation of a woman (Claude Kelogianian) in the group is but a confirmation of the current trend. The saxophone that has been men's exclusivity for decades is now attracting more and more female players.

The event will take place on Friday Jan. 21st, at 8:00 p.m. at the Amman Marriott Hotel and is presented by the French Cultural Centre in Amman, in cooperation with Air France and the Marriott.

Arab Potash Company installs new salt harvesters at Dead Sea

KARAK (Petra) — The Arab Potash Company (APC) is currently installing two additional salt harvesters to increase production of Dead Sea salt, according to an announcement by Raed Saoub at the APC plant near the southern tip of the Dead Sea.

Each of the new harvesters will cost \$4.5 million and each

have a capacity of harvesting 300 tonnes of salt per hour said Mr. Saoub. APC has four other harvesters.

Noting that the company has to date pumped 20 million cubic metres of water from the Dead Sea to produce the salt, Mr. Saoub said that the sea is estimated to hold 43 billion tonnes of salt which include at

least two billion tonnes of potash sufficing the APC plants for more than 400 years.

Adding that Jordan is considered the seventh country in the world in terms of producing and exporting potash, Mr. Saoub said that 90 per cent of the product is used as a component in the manufacture of fertilisers.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- Art exhibition by artist Makram Khaghandouqah at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- Art exhibition by artist Omar Al Basoul at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Exhibition on the art of architecture at the French Cultural Centre.
- Photo exhibition by artist Muwaffaq Al Sheikh at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Art exhibition by artist Sadik Kwaish entitled "Talisman" at Baladna Art Gallery.
- Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artists and "Chair" exhibition at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lubdeh.
- Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian

artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

FILMS

- Film in English on surrealist artist "Dali" at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khalid Khreis) on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
- Film entitled "Dial M For Murder" at the American Center on Thursday at 5:00 p.m. (105 min.).

MUSICAL THEATRE

- The "Les Sax" Quartet plays Bach, Scarlatti, and others at the Marriott Hotel on Friday at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURES

- Lecture in German (with translation in Turkish) entitled "The Cousins of Juha in Germany and Turkey" by Dr. Dieter Glade at the Turkish Cultural Centre on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

Two leftist parties merge

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two leftist political parties Wednesday announced their decision to merge after months of negotiations between party cadres. The Jordan People's Democratic Party (JPDP) and the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party (JDPUP) disclosed that their executive committees had agreed on a merger after a meeting late Tuesday.

In what was an expected move, the JPDP and JDPUP decided to begin their merger by creating a coordination committee for their respective executive committees.

"These have been long-standing plans and now we are beginning their implementation," said Azmi Khawaja, the secretary general of the JDPUP. "No one is quite sure how long it will take, but we are very serious about the merger."

The announcement follows months of negotiations between the two parties whose members ran on a joint six-person ticket for the November legislative elections. Only one of the joint-ticket candidates, Bassam Haddadin of the JPDP, was successful in his bid for a seat in Parliament. Mr. Haddadin is a Karak deputy.

The two parties are Jorda-

nian offshoots of the Palestinian parties, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) respectively.

The former became an offshoot of the latter in 1968, when political positions on the issue of Palestine divided the mother party.

But since the Arab-Israeli peace talks began in Madrid in October 1991, the two Jordanian and Palestinian parties have drawn closer in policy positions. Both reject the premise of the on-going talks and represent the remnants of the hard-line leftist activists of the 1960s and 1970s.

Attempts at reform have been slow to come, and the two parties have been plagued by the lack of doctrinal and democratic reforms in party bureaucracy.

The JPDP and the JDPUP have lost much of their street support in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Both parties were fervent supporters of Iraq.

Although the exact number of supporters of the two parties is unknown, sympathisers were believed to number several thousand during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Supporters and members

of the two parties were closely watched by Jordan's security services before the democratisation process began in 1989. Many followers of the two Marxist movements went into exile in Syria and Lebanon after the 1970 war in Jordan only to return after democratic reforms were introduced in 1989.

Their merger will be the first involving "older" rather than "newer" or more recently evolving political groupings and parties in the Kingdom.

For now the leadership post will rotate among Azmi Khawaja and JDPD Secretary General Tayseer Zibri. The two parties hope that a timetable and framework will be worked out between the two groups by mid-February.

"We are working towards a merger of the leadership and the party members and supporters," said a spokesman for the JPDP Wednesday. "Hopefully the merger will be completed before the end of the year," said the spokesman.

The merger follows similar moves by the Damascus-based DFLP and PFLP in the fall of 1993.

"The merger is positive," said Mr. Khawaja, adding that "maybe other parties will also want to join us at a later stage."

Jordanian-Egyptian committee to resume commerce meetings

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A joint Jordanian-Egyptian committee on commercial relations will meet in Amman next week to streamline trade between the two countries, and pave the way for a meeting of a higher committee in March for the first time since 1990.

The Jan. 26-27 meeting of the panel, headed by the ministers of trade of the two countries, will discuss issues related to trade and adopt short-term decisions and draw up recommendations which will be discussed during the March 19 meeting of the higher committee, co-chaired by the prime ministers of the two sides.

The decision to resume regular meetings of the committees, which set forth annual trade targets and review ongoing and future joint projects among other things, was taken during a visit to Amman last month of Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa.

It also followed an improvement of relations sealed by a summit meeting of His Majesty King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in November.

The strain in ties were caused by conflicting positions adopted during the Gulf crisis sparked by the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The joint committee, chaired by the prime ministers of the two countries, met last a few days before the invasion of Kuwait, and, in the ensuing strain in relations, many of its decisions remained unimplemented.

"There is a full agenda for discussions, including some of the pending issues as well as new ideas and proposals which have emerged in view of the progress made in the peace process," said an official.

In addition to a regular flow of trade, Jordan and Egypt also set up joint projects, including a maritime transport company which operates the ferry route between Aqaba and Nuweibeh.

While the joint projects continued their functions without much hindrance, discussions on consolidating their activities

and following up on a series of agreements in tourism, exchange of expertise and technology etc. remained frozen.

One notable exception was the implementation of an agreement to link the power networks of the two countries and a broader accord involving Turkey and Iraq. Syria has been invited to join the regional power link-up, officials say.

The main focus of talks that Mr. Musa had during his Amman visit last month was bilateral relations with particular attention on reviving the joint higher committee.

"The state of relations between Jordan and Egypt has been abnormal, but now things have been put back on track," said the official. "There always was a minimum level of cooperation despite the unfortunate differences caused by the Gulf crisis, but that was not simply enough."

Among the issues on the table for the higher committee are also the situation of Egyptian workers in Jordan and the status of Jordanian students studying at Egyptian universities.

Comprehensive health insurance is inevitable, say officials

AMMAN (Petra) — The Health Ministry Wednesday said the continuous rise in the cost of health services is making it inevitable that the government find an alternative means to meet the health needs of the public, namely a comprehensive health insurance scheme involving the private and public sectors.

Tawfiq Loubani, director of health insurance at the Ministry of Health, told a workshop convened to discuss health insurance that the ministry has

been earmarking increasing sums to cover the cost of health services to government employees and their dependents, but the rising costs of such services due to the employment of modern technology was causing financial strain that could lead to a situation in which no health ministry scheme would be able to cater to the public's needs.

Dr. Loubani stressed the need for a more reasonable plan to benefit all citizens, and this, he suggested, could take

the form of a comprehensive plan covering all citizens, but involving private organisations and firms.

High health costs is making it impossible for private individuals to shoulder the expenses, added Dr. Loubani.

Referring to the present services, he said the state currently covers the cost of health services to the military and their dependents, government employees and their families and a great number of needy people.

U.S. commerce chief talks about human rights, the need to change and courage as a key to peace

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ronald Brown, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, not only discussed business matters during his brief stay in Amman Monday but he also found time to talk about the decades-long African-Americans' fight for full rights in the American society.

Following a one-hour lecture about the black Americans human rights movement, Mr. Brown was questioned by his audience on issues related to human rights in the region and U.S. influence in this regard.

The questions raised, during the lecture held Monday at the Royal Cultural Centre, primarily focused on the U.S.-enforced embargo on the port of Aqaba, the image of Arabs and Muslims in the West, the peace process and the rights of the Palestinian people.

"We hear about human rights, about U.N. resolutions,

but we hardly hear of any implementation anywhere," protested Mohammad Milhem of Amnesty International.

"There is no question that much injustice has been done to the Palestinians," Mr. Brown replied. "Changes can be made, but we should make a leap to the future."

Mr. Brown, pointing out that the audience complaints have been repeatedly raised by officials and the public alike during his visit to the region, said that the peoples themselves in this region can make a difference and are the ones capable of introducing change.

"If I told my grandfather that I would be here in this position with four other African-Americans, he would think that I am out of my mind," he said. "We have to have belief in ourselves," he added in response to a student of the Amman Baccalaureate School asking for a "piece of advice."

Emphasising the need for people to be more courageous and more willing to introduce change and make peace, Mr. Brown made continuous reference to Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's work, teachings and achievements which brought change to African-Americans, pointing out that "I wouldn't be here in this capacity today were it not for Dr. King."

"The ascent of African-Americans to positions of leadership might have been delayed by years or decades were it not for Dr. King's effective organising and profound moral authority," Mr. Brown said in the meeting which was organised by the World Affairs Council and coincided with the commemoration of the 64th birthday of Dr. King, who was born on Jan. 15.

Dr. King, an African-American Baptist minister, led the mass civil rights movement in the United States from the

mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. He rose to national prominence through the organisation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, promoting non-violent tactics such as the "March on Washington" to achieve human rights.

Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace in 1964. The U.S. Congress voted to observe a national holiday in his honour, beginning in 1986.

"In our lifetimes, no region of our world has seen more conflict and bloodshed than this (Middle East)... but today I ask, in Dr. King's name and as President Clinton's emissary, that we understand that real courage lies in making peace, not war. That our heroes, our leaders are those who are the peacemakers," said Mr. Brown, who was a close associate of Dr. King.

"After he himself had been stabbed, beaten, threatened

and jailed, Martin Luther King and thousands of Americans still fought on, with words, with actions and with ideals...

"As Dr. King said: 'human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... without persistent effort, time itself becomes an ally of the insurgent and primitive forces of irrational emotionalism and social destruction,' and so he pushed forward," Mr. Brown emphasised.

In his lecture, the human rights leader raised hopes of peace and its impact on development and prosperity, but insisted that peace cannot be fully realised "on an empty stomach."

"To do what is right without violence... to have courage in the face of brutality... to be true to a vision of a more just and righteous world... to think first of our brothers and sisters... to overcome barriers of race or nationality or religion,

to truly help one another: these are the acts by which the memory of Martin Luther King challenges us to perform."

"To those of us who are intellectuals or clergy or businesspeople or politicians — people who value ideas and ideals — falls the burden of leadership. Because outside this room, within and beyond these borders, there are millions of people who do not have the luxury of philosophy or intellectual discourse."

"They live in tents or slums or refugee camps. They cannot read. Their lives are dominated by fear and pain and hunger...."

"Our very real challenge — yours and mine — is to prove to these millions that peace, that brotherhood, that ideals of Dr. King can bring about a very real improvement in their lot. Dr. King understood that an empty stomach is a poor advisor," he said.

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Traffic accidents and traffic education

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

I WAS just getting out of the main highway into the exit the other day when the car in the left lane squeaked violently and came to a complete stop, tossing an old man into the air then back to the front bumper and into the street. It all happened in a matter of seconds. I did not know what exactly became of the old man who was carried into the car hurriedly and rushed to the hospital, but judging from what I had seen, I concluded that the accident was not fatal. I hope I was right in my conclusion for the sake of the poor old man and the miserable cab driver.

A few minutes later, I recalled the whole scene trying to put the various details together. The car which hit the old man was coming into Amman through the Zarqa highway (the so-called auto-strade) which takes one over a bridge and then abruptly into the heart of Al Mabatta area and downtown Amman. The old man, very old indeed from the way he was walking before he was hit and the stick he was using for support, came off a bus and started crossing the highway.

Though certainly tragic, this particular incident is both

instructive and illustrative of why so many traffic accidents happen in our society and of the underlying causes behind them. An examination of the facts reveals at least three mistakes.

The first is clearly the driver's. It is obvious that at the moment of the accident he was still cruising at the speed normally permitted on highways outside city limits (90 kph) when he was in fact within city limits where the speed is supposed to drop gradually to 60 kph. Most probably he was also still under the influence of the slightly meditative state of mind one usually experiences on relatively long, comfortably spacious, and pedestrian-free highways. The old man was very visible for he was walking in the middle of the road. Surely, the cab driver is guilty of both ignoring the speed-limit signs and failure to intuitively shift into the state of mental and physical alertness one is supposed to shift into upon entering a crowded town or city. The truly disturbing thing here is that our motorists fail to distinguish not only between a highway outside the city and a highway inside, but (worse) be-

tween a narrow road or alley in the middle of an overpopulated neighbourhood and an empty road in the desert. Speed seems to have become second nature to us.

But I am also sure that the driver, like many selfish motorists in our society, is guilty as well as carelessness, absent-mindedness, and utter disregard (and perhaps even disrespect) of pedestrians. After all, the streets belong to us motorists, and who are these troublesome pedestrians to disturb the smooth flow of our speed, the relish of our conversation with people sitting next to us, and the serenity of our day-dreaming? I say, the old man was right in the middle of the street, at 1:00 p.m., in a sunny afternoon. An ant two kilometres away should have been able to spot him.

The second mistake is, undoubtedly the old man's himself. He ought to have been more cautious. For one thing, he did not seem to me to be fit enough physically, judging from the stick he was carrying and his noticeably bent back, to cross the street speedily and safely. For another, he ought to have realised that crossing a highway is very different from, and much riskier than, crossing a regular street or alley. He ought

either to have waited until he was absolutely certain he could cross safely or to have asked for assistance from any bystander. He did neither. I cannot tell as to what exactly went into his mind when he decided to cross at the moment he did, but I have seen (and daily see) many incidents where pedestrians cross carelessly, foolishly, and even rudely. The street belongs to them. To hell with the drivers.

The highway itself poses a special problem, the more so because it is still a recent development in our society. Pedestrians crossing the congested streets of downtown Amman and other similar areas usually take more care and the traffic is usually slow. The highways have a different story. The traffic is faster, and the pedestrians crossing them are (perhaps because of their spaciousness they do not appear particularly dangerous) less cautious. What adds to the problem is that our highways are not recognised as highways. People live right at their edges, schools are built next to them, and mosques are erected close by — there are three mosques right next to the Istiklal highway alone. People cross anytime, anywhere. I think we should stop

calling them highways and treating them as such.

The third mistake is the bus driver's. He must have been fully aware that the poor "senior" citizen (the old man) who was just getting off his bus was too old to make it by himself to the other side. Would it have been too much trouble for him to have gotten out of his bus, which incidentally was still standing picking up new passengers, and taken the old man by the hand and assisted him in getting to the other side? He could have at least asked one of the passengers to do it if he were afraid of a small exercise in the open air. I am not saying that drivers should have an obligation and responsibility towards all passengers (God forbid!). What I am saying, rather, is that they ought to assist the needy: the senior citizens and the children. But no, this is too much to expect. Most of our drivers are either too busy collecting money or too lazy and irresponsible to care.

The most conspicuous victim in the scenario above (which happens almost daily) is the old man. The victims are the cab driver through his carelessness and the bus driver through his aloofness. But to tell the truth, all three

are victims, victims of a society which has failed to instill (via the family, the school, the university and other social institutions) true moral values in its citizens — values which are not spoken and bragged about but applied and translated into live daily action, values which become second nature to us (like the earth we tread upon and the air we breathe), values which wash out our paradoxically dulled/dead or aggressive/nasty instincts replacing them with a first-class conscience and super habits and deeds.

We need serious traffic education. It may be cute (and perhaps even instructive) to teach school kids, through poetry and songs, the functions of a red and green traffic light. But it would be much more effective and worthwhile to take schoolboys and girls up to grade six, at least twice annually, out to the streets and teach them how to cross the road, get on and off a bus, walk on the pavement (the way it is shown in an excellent programme being aired these days through JTV). Our driving lessons should also focus as much on ethics and values as on the mechanics of driving vehicles. This, and only this, is the ultimate solution.

Democracy in action

TOUJAN FAISAL and 14 of her colleagues at the Lower House of Parliament yesterday moved a motion asking the government to write a draft legislation that would address some women's grievances. Ms. Faisal and her fellow deputies, acting in accordance with the Constitution, asked the government to submit amendments to the existing laws that would grant women rights equal to men's in that they could grant their nationality to their children and their foreign husbands and that would give women the right to acquire a passport without the prior approval of her husband.

This must be good news for many women. But certainly not to all, because many would not hear of the matter to begin with and some are more concerned with other issues that deal with basic rights for food and shelter for their children. Nevertheless, Ms. Faisal's move is a significant one since it reinforces the role of Parliament as an initiator of legislation. During the last four years, deputies were able to get the government to initiate legislation. Notable among the deputies' endeavours was the Muslim Brotherhood deputies' call on the government to produce a law that prohibits alcohol. The government obliged and the draft law, that does not in fact ban alcohol altogether, is in the House to consider.

These two motions, Toujan Faisal's and the Brotherhood's, are representative of the social and, to an extent, political forces that interact in our society. In the case of alcohol and the Brotherhood, only a small percentage of Jordanians would bother if alcohol were banned. Only the liberals oppose the ban on the ground that it would be an infringement on individual rights. Meanwhile, conservatives and a sizeable majority of Islamists will oppose Ms. Faisal's motion. Neither the conservatives nor the fundamental Islamists would agree to granting women more of their individual rights.

What, therefore, we are going to witness this summer is democracy in action. While the Islamists are expected to campaign hard for their cause, women, lacking organisation, leadership or enthusiasm, are not foreseen to push their cause as hard. What should triumph at the end is, of course, the will of the people. But since most people, especially women, are apolitical, victory will be on the side of those who use public relations best.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE PEACE process that has been going on for nearly two years has achieved nothing, but the recent meeting of President Bill Clinton and Hafez Al Assad and the upcoming meeting which His Majesty King Hussein and the American president could help stimulate this stalled process, said Al Dustour daily Wednesday. The paper said that the other alternative is the status quo, of no-war no-peace and a progress towards security and stability in the region. Jordan has been leaving no stone unturned in search for an acceptable formula to ensure a lasting peace out of its belief that only tension and disturbances would continue unless a lasting settlement has been reached. No one wants this good opportunity of attaining peace to be lost and so Jordan is keen on pursuing the talks with the United States which is sponsoring the peace process to help achieve this goal, said the daily. The eyes, which were turned to Geneva at the Clinton-Assad summit are now turned towards Washington where the King and Clinton would be holding an important meeting to find means to give momentum to the peace process, it said. The Jordanian diplomacy, said the paper, is keen on pursuing all efforts to keep the peace process alive and such is hinging in this concern on the Clinton-Hussein meeting in the American capital, it added. The paper expressed hope that the two leaders would do all that is possible to give further momentum to the drive for peace the nations of the region aspired to.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour said that the 100 Palestinian factions which are now stationed in Damascus would be in a difficult position once Syria has concluded a peace settlement with the Jewish state. Saleh Al Qullab said that it would be unreasonable and illogical for Damascus to allow these ten groups for launching propaganda campaign against Israel or incite resistance activities against the Jewish state from the Syrian capital.

The Israeli government and the settlements

By Israel Shahak

The Rabin government's support for Israel's settlement programme is now the crucial issue in Israeli politics. Moreover, it can be shown that in supporting settlement, Mr. Rabin has the backing of the U.S. The meaning of this policy can only be understood by looking into what the Israeli government actually does.

Some important Hebrew press commentators realised some time ago that Mr. Rabin was safeguarding the interests of the settlers. After the prime minister's amicable meeting with settler leaders on Nov. 10, Meron Benvenisti observed that "for all the differences in ideology, the chasm between the two positions is not as deep as some would like to depict it." In substantiation, Mr. Benvenisti points to "the extraordinary generosity with which the government keeps disbursing money to the settlers for all their daily activities, which include their anti-Arab demonstrations and acts of vandalism against Arab property."

It is clear why Israeli policies towards settlement, which are frequently reiterated and persistently implemented, cannot be openly forced on the Palestinian public. Beginning at the end of September, a broad Israeli political consensus emerged around the so-called "five noes" formula. For the purposes of this article only two noes are of relevance: "no to abandoning any settlement," and "no to the imposition of any restraints upon the Israeli army anywhere in the territories."

The real implications of these two negatives can best be understood from by probing article by the military correspondent of Hadashot, Alex Fishman. Fishman describes "a pattern of interaction which in the last few weeks has evolved in the territories between the army and the settlers. The defence ministry and the regional commands have established full partnership with the settlers. All settlements are cooperating with the government after coming to the conclusion that the two sides now have common interests." Fishman concludes, rightly in my view, that "the status quo with regard to Jewish settlement has become an iron wall surrounding them."

The concept of "an iron wall" is borrowed from a historic article by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the ideological founding father of Likud, published as long ago as 1925. For decades it was regarded by the entire Zionist Labour movement with genuine or faked revulsion. The "iron wall" means that the Zionist state should behave like a feudal lord dominating his realm by means of heavily armed knights intervening from behind the walls of an impenetrable castle, to maintain the status quo.

The case of Netzarim The case of the Gaza Strip settlement Netzarim is instructive. It was described by Nahum Barnea as a kibbutz now inhabited mostly by Gush Emunim extremists, who are not doing any work. They just study Talmud, for which they are paid by the government. As Barnea explains it, "the original intention" of founding Netzarim "was to wedge a set-

tlement between Gaza and the large refugee camps located to the south of it," which, in the Israeli army's lingo, are called "the camps of the centre." Like an isolated fortress, Netzarim is surrounded by huge chunks of Arab populated land. It is separated from the Jewish populated areas both in Israel and in the Katif Bloc. "A senior figure in the (Israeli) security system, charged with overseeing arrangements for the Israeli army's withdrawal from the concentrations of Palestinian population," explained to Barnea that since the Oslo agreement "stipulates that settlements are to stay on, every settlement turns into a fortress of military value. Had Netzarim been an army base, the PLO could demand its abandonment, along with bases located in the midst of inhabited parts of the Gaza Strip which the army is going to abandon. But since Netzarim is plainly defined on the map as a kibbutz, the Israeli presence is assured there." The army can use it for effectively establishing its presence between the city of Gaza and "the camps of the centre."

Barnea's prediction was fulfilled during the first weeks of November, when the Palestinian delegation to the Tabá and Cairo talks asked Israel to evacuate Netzarim as "a gesture." However, as reported by Hadashot, Mr. Rabin announced to the Labour Knesset faction that Israel will insist on keeping Netzarim.

Mr. Rabin's support for settlements of strategic value means encouraging the Gush Emunim settlers, who are ready to settle in places like Netzarim where their less zealous brethren are unwilling to go. This applies to the West Bank as well. Hanna Kim reported how "during a secret visit, not publicised by the media, Benjamin Ben-Elizer (the housing minister) laid a cornerstone for a new neighbourhood in Efrat (south of Bethlehem). Despite the avowed policy of freezing the settlements, it was Yizhak Rabin who personally instructed the housing minister to oversee the building of that neighbourhood. Although called 'new', the neighbourhood is designed to greatly expand the Efrat area and attract throngs of new settlers."

American support

The best overview of Mr. Rabin's settlement policies and of American support for them can be found in an article by Ya'ir Fidel, who shows that subsidies for the settlers are budgeted "under the name of the transfer of funds for purchasing whatever may be needed for settlers' local councils and other public associations." Petrol for journeys to demonstrations is paid for by local councils which are subsidised by the government almost in their entirety... But "transfer of funds for purchasing whatever may be needed" is only a small fraction of a long list of special budgetary expenditures which the Labour-Meretz government has in the last year been showering on the settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Data collected in the ministries show that the Rabin government has only slightly, if at all, reduced the previous budgetary allocations for the settlements. Declarations are one thing, reality is another.

Mr. Rabin's settlement policies are supported by the U.S. Fidel tells how, in August 1992, Mr. Rabin, as Israel's newly elected prime minister, met Mr. Bush in Maine. "Bush learned from that conversation that Rabin intended to continue disbursing lots of money for settlements. But he did not demand that Israel discontinue the disbursement. He only said that the pertinent sums would be subtracted from the loan guarantees."

"According to the agreement I have with the Likud administration," said Mr. Bush, "everything Israel invests in the territories can be subtracted from the loan guarantees." Mr. Rabin responded: "If you subtract just what we allocate there, we agree." Fidel comments that under Mr. Shamir such agreements were kept secret, but Mr. Rabin's government "was forced by Bush to submit to the Americans a detailed inventory of all expenses on the settlements, as a condition of obtaining the loan guarantees."

The Clinton administration, however, gave up even this minor gain. Fidel tells how "members of a low-ranking American team visiting Israel

met twice with high-ranking finance ministry officials... It was decided that the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics would make all computations alone, without being overseen by any Americans." This decision meant that the Americans were granting Mr. Rabin a significant discount. First of all, they let Israel alone submit all the data. Second, they accepted the Israeli view that not everything Israel was spending in the territories was to be taken into account and that Israel was to decide how to categorise the expenditure in question. But even more significant was the tacit U.S. agreement to leave open the question of Israel's investments in the parts of Jerusalem annexed in 1967. "The Americans were notified that the total obtained by Israeli computations amounted to \$430m."

The Americans did not even try to question this figure. Unlike during the Bush administration, they did not come out with satellite photographs which could be compared with figures for construction in the territories that they were provided with. They received explanations about how the figure in question could be broken down by ministries, agreed, took the documents and went home. In truth, the figure presented to the Americans was \$270m lower than the one computed by the finance ministry when the latter did not yet know that the U.S. would consent to ignore Israel's investments in East Jerusalem. The finance ministry then estimated Israel's yearly investments beyond the Green Line as amounting to \$700m. The criteria for that computation were the same as those of the Central Bureau of Statistics.

No wonder Israel kept mum when the U.S. announced that an additional sum of \$7m would be subtracted from the guarantees, because the actual Israeli expenditure amounted to \$437m, \$7m more than reported by Israel. As Fidel comments, "the difference was supposed to be 'accounted for' by Israel's investments in East Jerusalem. The government ministers knew that in their generosity to Israel, the Americans had subtracted only \$7m from the guarantees instead of

the \$270m Israel invested in East Jerusalem." But the latter figure is also untrue. Israeli investment in East Jerusalem cannot be much higher.

In private, "a very senior Israeli official" told Fidel: "I do not care about the subtraction. Let them subtract even more, since they give us so much." We have to pay back the guarantee; in any case, so perhaps the less they amount to the better. But we should obtain grants. Besides, Christopher already told us that subtractions caused by the settlements might yet be to be annulled. Another senior Israeli official explained that, by way of a symbolic subtraction, the Americans managed to kill two birds with one stone. They signalled to the Israelis that they could construct in East Jerusalem without incurring any financial penalties, and

they gave the Palestinians what they like, namely the symbols, by making it explicit that East Jerusalem was considered occupied territory." No wonder Fidel, after listing allocations for the settlements figuring in every ministry's budget proposals for 1991, says in his conclusion: "Rabin can be predicted to continue to refuse to keep the settlements dry of funds. And the Americans will continue to understand him."

All subsequent news bears out this conclusion. The settlements are for Mr. Rabin the most important instrument of Israel's domination of the territories which he intends to continue. The facts created on the ground, and the money which pays for them, are more important for understanding Israeli policies than diplomacy and the fake declarations of junior ministers.

LETTERS

Petra revisited

To the Editor:

We came to Jordan full of enthusiasm and expectations, only to be disappointed in Petra.

After having wonderful experiences in Amman, Aqaba and Wadi Rum, we went to Petra on Jan. 14. We found a great, cheap hotel about five kilometres out of town and next morning we went to the visiting site.

We were shocked by the JD 5 entrance fee for foreign tourists, a 500 per cent increase since last year. Considering the fact that Jordanians only pay 250 fils, this is quite a discrimination.

Hoping for information on a map of Petra, and asking a few questions, we were told by an employee at the ticket office in a rude and quite insulting way to "be quiet, pay and go away." We do not feel this is the way to speak to or treat tourists in any country.

We found afterwards that several other tourists had a similar or even worse experience at the ticket office.

The first insult was followed by others from the ever-insistent horse, camel and donkey peddlers trying to sell us a (rather expensive) ride. We would have considered it a fair thing if only they took "no" for an answer.

We almost felt we had enough when we entered the most amazing and beautiful gorge, with layer upon layer of different toned sandstone. Coming into view was the wonderful Treasury. Its splendour, though, is destroyed by stands full of all sorts of souvenirs and junk, along with their yelling sellers. As these people seem to be allowed to be anywhere they want, it is an almost impossibility to take photos and enjoy the view.

All the time we were there, there was no let up in this unacceptable harassment until we arrived at the monastery where, unfortunately, we had to run for shelter into a cave because of heavy rainfall. A good cup of tea would have been nice, but the high price of half a dinar for a minicup was just a little too much.

Advised by the police to leave the area, we headed to the museum which is meant to be open all day but which the man on duty had left at 1:30 p.m.

Totally disappointed, we were driven out by the police because of the rising flood water. We were told that we could return the next day with the same ticket.

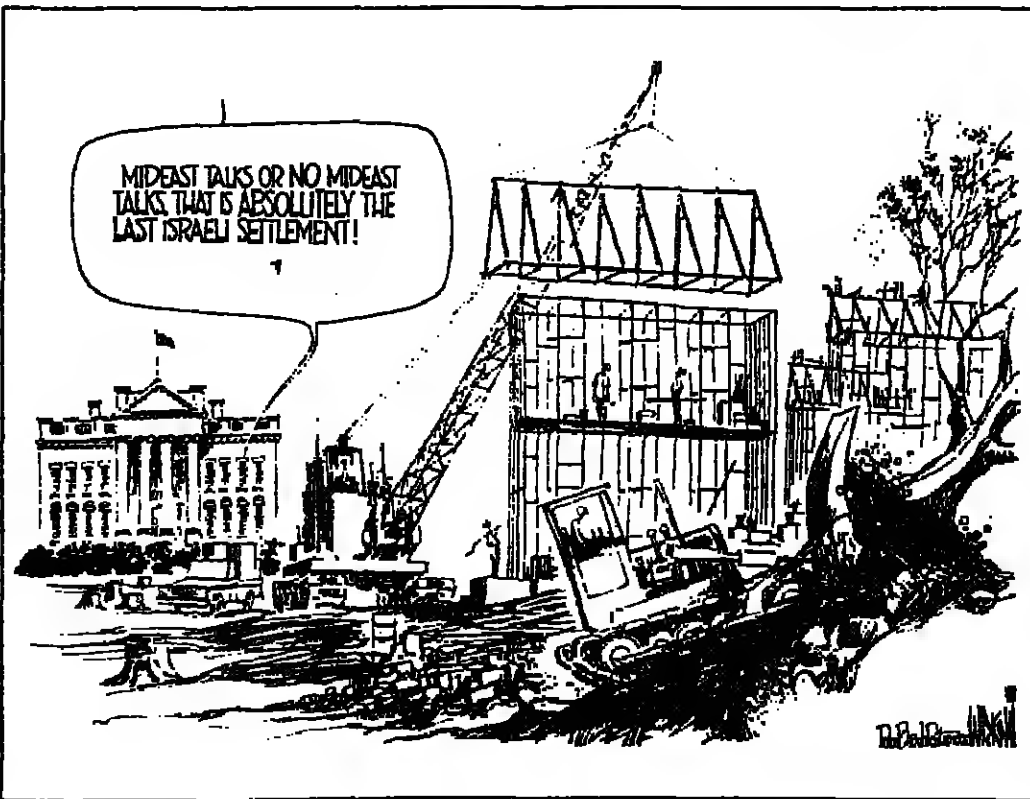
Only one of us returned. I found myself being shuttled between the ticket office and the police who seemed to have a big difference of opinion. Several telephone calls later I was informed by the inspector of antiquities, Saliman Farajat, that I could enter. The police would pay me JD 5 fee!

Later, we went to the Ministry of Tourism in Amman where we were taken from office to office before meeting Director of Tourism Services Hamdi Hadidi who asked us to write a formal letter of complaint.

We now leave Jordan with mixed feelings of wonderful hospitality and utter rudeness. Jordan is a fantastic country to travel in, but we hope it does not take too many more bad experiences to be reported on by other tourists before something is done as it would be a shame for the growing tourist industry.

Brett Archer,
New Zealand,
Lieke Vyncke,
Belgium.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.



Naina Yeltsin: I'm no first lady, just the president's wife

By Candice Hughes
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — She irons her husband's clothes, makes him dumplings and keeps out of his business. And on a calling her "first lady," she says, "I'm not."

"In order to be a lady, let me be the first lady, one who is like a lady," Naina Yeltsin once said. "I'm not a lady, just the Russian president's wife."

Meet the woman behind the man — soft-spoken and publicity shy, her life centers around home and family. A plump, petite political life cut from the old, pre-revolutionary Mrs. Yeltsin,

61, is rarely seen and rarely heard.

She seems to be the antithesis of her high-powered American counterpart, Hillary Rodham Clinton, or her Soviet predecessor, Raisa Gorbachev.

But she knows what it's like to juggle family life and career and to stand by her man in times of trouble. Her devotion to Russia's oft-embattled president is legendary.

"Nunya took me and loved me as I am: Obstinate and prickly," Boris Yeltsin wrote in his autobiography, *Against the Grain*.

While the Clinton and Gorbachev marriages are famous for political pillow talk, the Yeltsin household

is decidedly old-fashioned. "Yeltsin rules the roost — and he doesn't bring his work home."

"In our family," he once said, "I'm the boss."

Mrs. Yeltsin has never disagreed, at least not publicly.

"Our whole family life revolves around Boris Nikolayevich," she said in a rare, 1991 interview. "We try to make his life as easy and nice as possible."

The president, she added, "never allows me to mix in his affairs."

Boris Yeltsin and Naina Glimina met as engineering students at Ural's Polytechnical Institute in the Siberian city of Yekaterinburg, then were sent to jobs

in different cities after graduation.

At their reunion a year later, Mr. Yeltsin wrote, "my heart was ready to burst with a flood of emotions. I looked at her and knew at once that we would spend the rest of our lives together."

That was two daughters, three grandchildren, more than 30 years and one revolution ago.

Mrs. Yeltsin is careful to cultivate a "hausfrau" image, but while she was raising two daughters and cooing a demanding, workaholic husband, she was also pursuing her own career.

The last member of her

family to quit the Communist Party, Mrs. Yeltsin was an engineer at the Institute of Waterways in Yekaterinburg for 29 years, rising to head a major project. She quit when her husband got a top party job in Moscow.

The Moscow post brought the kind of perks and status that made the wives of many party honchos imperious and pumpered. But Mrs. Yeltsin, by all accounts, never basked in her special status.

Nor was she enthralled by the capital, as were many provincials.

In Yekaterinburg, this daughter of peasants once said, "my heart feels free." In Moscow, "I find it hard to breathe."



Mrs. Naina Yeltsin (right) and her husband Russian President Boris Yeltsin (left) during a recent official dinner in honour of the visiting U.S. President Bill Clinton and the first lady Hillary at the Kremlin (AFP photo)

New Yorkers fighting 'quality of life' battle

By Arthur Spiegelman
Reuters

NEW YORK — A new odyssey of "fighting back" is sweeping New York these days as the city at night sleeps cracks with a subway beggars, owners, drug-dealers and even the homeless men to wash car windows.

Is it life-style change, a war or just window-dressing aimed at covering the more unpleasant parts of life?

One would expect residents on city where an estimated 2,000 people are ordered each year, almost 700,000 and 93,000 robbery — to be restless. But no signs of trying to, with that, restlessness, burning into the open, a "tough guy" mayor, idiom! Giuliani, takes

over, seeking converts to his new breed of puritanism and his vow to restore "the civil right of safety" to every New Yorker.

While some critics are impressed with the mood change, many others charge that nothing real is being done and the programmes that have caught media attention are just efforts to paper over serious problems — as when former Mayor Ed Koch ordered pictures of bumpy faces placed in the windows of abandoned buildings lining the Cross-Bronx Expressway.

In recent weeks, hundreds of New Yorkers have traded in their guns for 100 certificates to buy toys — a programme started by an immigrant businessman sick of the constant gun battles that bedevil the Washington

Heights district in upper Manhattan.

Fernando Mateo's programme gained immediate national attention — both praise and scorn — and other New Yorkers are weighing in with programmes that cry out for consideration in a country that has defined crime as its number one problem in the post cold war era.

Nynex, the New York telephone company, is replacing push button phones on street corners with old fashioned rotary dial ones as a means of stopping drug dealers from using them for business. The theory is that you can't dial a beeper from a rotary phone so drug dealers can't use them to get in touch with customers.

But there are problems with the plan — no one makes rotary phones any

more, the phone company only has a few hundred in stock and electronic stores sell 15 devices that can convert tone signals on a rotary phone to dial into beepers.

The city's 8,400 street corner phones are often used by dealers to do business and in the past, Nynex has installed phones that do not receive incoming calls and taken numbers off those that do. It has also improved lighting around them and removed phones from areas with heavy drug sales.

None of those approaches have worked and on any given day, you can watch dealers use the public phones — even outside one of the city's biggest drug rehabilitation centres.

Meanwhile, the city's Transit Authority has decided to crack down on beg-

gars going from car-to-car on the city's subway trains, asking a captive audience for money.

The Transit Authority has launched a public relations campaign to ask subway riders not to give beggars anything — not even a thin dime. The ban does not apply to authorised peddlers who solicit donations for various charities.

The authority's president, Alan Kiepper, says it is a supply-and-demand problem. "If people stop giving, panhandlers will go elsewhere and get treatment."

They may go as far as the entrance way to a subway stop or simply ignore the campaign altogether.

Mr. Giuliani's new police chief, ex-Boston top cop William Bratton, has come into office promising a

crackdown on the "squeegee men" who pounce on motorists stuck at traffic lights and wash their windshields, demanding tips for the service.

Chief Bratton says he will no longer tolerate "quality of life" offences but he has been denounced by civil liberties activists who say he is wasting his time and not attacking real crime at all.

Chief Bratton argues that you have to deal with the low-level stuff — like the "squeegee men" — to create an atmosphere that will allow police to tackle the more serious offences.

Others argue that you need real reform like gun and drug control laws that work before society will see any improvements. "Everything else is 'feel-good' propaganda," they say.

Spain's lotteries work annual miracle

By Robert Hart
Reuters

MADRID — Spain's giant Christmas and New Year national lotteries, the world's biggest in prize money, have just performed their annual miracle of enriching the humble and changing lives.

First prize in the Christmas Lottery, famous as "El Gordo" (the Fat One), went almost entirely to the town of El Campello, population 11,000, just north of the southeastern city of Alicante.

The winning number — 47,884 — brought a total of 21 billion pesetas (\$144 million) in prize money to people in El Campello.

A local carnival group trying to raise money for its forthcoming "Christians And Moors" Festival sold 700 tickets carrying the winning number.

In the New Year Lottery, known as El Nino (the Child), some 300 people in the Catalan village of Sort — Catalan for "Luck" — shared in a 9.5 billion peseta (\$66 million) first prize bonanza with the number 8,036.

Many owed their fortune to the tenacity of lottery stall owner Rosa Gali in selling a generally unpopular number.

"We have kept this number since we opened eight years ago and it has always been hard to sell because people thought it was an ugly number," she said. "One lady tried to give me back her ticket because she didn't like the number, but I convinced her to keep it."

The 1993 Christmas Lottery carried total prize money of 150 billion pesetas (\$1.1 billion) and El Nino 58 billion pesetas (\$400 million).

In both cases the individual numbers are divided into several series, which are in turn split into fractions, which are further broken into tenths or "decimos."

Tickets bought in a lottery stall are for one "decimo" and cost 3,000 pesetas (\$20), but can be subdivided even further.

Thus hundreds, or even thousands, of people can share in a single number, which is usually sold in all its parts in not more than two or three different areas of the country.

In Villajoyosa, near El Campello, the staff of the massive care unit of the small local hospital shared 100 million pesetas (\$690,000) from "El Gordo."

"We did not celebrate because our unit is full with people who are gravely ill," said one nurse.

A 30-year-old lorry driver took 90 million pesetas (\$620,000) home to the northern wine region of La Rioja after buying several "decimos" as he passed through the Alicante area.

For "El Nino" all 28 series of number 8,036 were held by the single lottery kiosk of Sort which supplies the town of 1,500 and villages in the surrounding district.

In the nearby village of Figuerola D'Orcau (population 230), bar owner Constanti Aranda sold tickets to just about everyone.

"Almost every household had at least one 'decimo', which means they collected 24 million pesetas (\$165,000) each," he said.

Aranda said Figuerola had been suffering badly from the effects of the recession. "People were having a hard time and many were living on credit. This money will open many doors."

But 74-year-old Francesc Martinez was sad. "The money has come to me when I don't need it any more," he said wryly.

The sort district, which lives mainly from tourism, plans to use some of its winnings to reopen a ski station closed several years ago because of economic problems.

The ritual of drawing "El Gordo" and "El Nino" bodes millions of Spaniards in thrall via television or radio.

In "El Gordo" balls bearing the numbers and prizes are tossed in giant metal baskets before one is ejected at random from each.

The numbers and corresponding prizes are chanted by relays of pupils from a Madrid school for orphans and fatherless children. It can take up to three hours before all the big prizes emerge.

"El Nino" is less of an ordeal. It is all over in half an hour, with the major prizes called one after another by the schoolchildren after a series of smaller prizes are drawn.

The Spanish, among Europe's most dedicated gamblers, spent a total 789 billion pesetas (\$5.4 billion) on national lotteries and other state-run gambling opportunities in 1993.

The two big lotteries accounted for 490 billion pesetas (\$3.4 billion), followed at a respectful distance by smaller lotteries and the football pools.

Clinic raises odds for parents seeking sons

By Joathan Sprague
Reuters

HONG KONG — "Jade" a baby boy, day for a day, run an old Chinese ring. Now a Hong Kong vic offers prospective parents odd of about 80 per cent on getting jade.

The Gender Choice Centre says its sperm separation and artificial insemination service provides a 75-80 per cent chance of conceiving a boy and about 70 per cent a girl — at \$2,000 for counselling and initial treatment.

More than 600 inquiries poured in since the centre opened in November. 148 couples had come in for counselling. Almost all asking why, medical adviser Dr George Rose said.

"I think you should look at it as family planning," Rose said.

"A lot of them say — we're going to go on trying until we get the boy we want. And without your help we're going to end up with a much bigger family than we might really want," he added.

The centre is the second set up by Dr. Rose and partner Dr. Peter Liu. The two opened the London Gender Clinic in January.

The London centre has fielded 3,000 inquiries since opening, with about 150 couples eventually taking the service. About 20 pregnancies have resulted so far, two of which are already known to be of the chosen sex, with the first baby due any day now.

About 60 per cent of ethnic European couples wanted girls, but of the two-thirds of clients who were ethnic Asian, a large proportion wanted boys, Dr. Rose said.

As in London, the Hong Kong clinic has sparked a debate on the desirability and morality of sex selection, especially given the weight Chinese culture gives to sons. But that debate is complicated by another life-or-death issue.

"We would be replacing baby killings," Dr. Rose said, referring to frequent reports from mainland China of selective abortion of female fetuses and murder of newborn girls.

Baby girls are not despised in Hong Kong, although many parents may insist on at least one son to carry on the family name. The ratio of male to female children here is 108 to 100, about what can be expected naturally.

But in China, the ratio of male to female births is 114 to 100, reportedly due to selective abortions and infanticide by parents desper-

ate for a son circumventing strict birth control policies that limit most families to one child.

The gap could lead to an army of 70 million bachelors by the end of the century. China's Farmer's Daily recently warned.

Dr. Rose and Dr. Liu said they had no interest in opening a clinic in China, although they had received some inquiries from couples there about receiving treatment.

They said abuse of their service — such as couples having only sons or aborting fetuses of the wrong sex — was unlikely as all clients had to agree to the clinic's code of ethics:

— Couples must be married

— They must already have at least one child and be seeking a baby of the opposite gender

— They must agree not to

abort whether or not the gender of any resulting fetus is the one they chose.

Dr. Rose and Dr. Liu said they declined to treat about two dozen couples in London who they felt would not abide by the code, and none of the pregnancies achieved so far have been aborted.

They also said gender selection could not skew sex ratios in Hong Kong, or worsen the imbalance in China if offered there.

Couples seeking treatment in London already had on average just under three children of one sex and sought a child of the other sex, and the same trend held true in Hong Kong, Dr. Rose said.

The time-consuming procedure, and the one-in-five chance of achieving pregnancy in any single treatment, also meant gender

selection clinics would have to stand on every street corner in China to make an appreciable impact, he said.

Of course China comes to Hong Kong in July 1997, when the British-ruled territory reverts to Chinese rule.

Dr. Rose and Dr. Liu said they hoped to remain in business through the transition, but if against all expectations China's one-child policy was imposed here, Dr. Liu said the impossibility of enforcing the clinic's ethical code would effectively force it to close.

But Dr. Rose speculated whether that was the moral course.

"If you're in a society where only one child is allowed, should there be gender choice?" he asked rhetorically. "The thing is they might still want (the baby) if it turned out the wrong sex. If you're replacing that, it has to be good."

Hamburgers, shades replace the hammer and sickle

By Pada Messina
Agence France Presse

MOSCOW — A cultural as well as a political change is under way in Russia's streets and homes. Reminders of the cold Soviet system are being replaced by symbols harking in the West.

"America has only given chewing gum," ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy complained recently. But reality he was way the mark.

For today's Russia, a struggle with drastic economic reforms designed to pull it into a free market, everything stumped in the USA is being seized upon by a vulgar consumer access to the old Soviet regime.

me. "Americanisation" is visible in every walk of daily life. From the fast-food McDonald's hamburger restaurants that have opened up across the country to the "bushkas" selling Pepsi-Cola and Marathon chocolate bars on the roadside.

Two years ago they were still to be seen lining the roads in their colourful, traditional headscarves, selling buckets of potatoes or hillyberries to passing motorists. Now such foods have been abandoned in favour of these symbols of the "new Russia."

One U.S. trade attaché said in Moscow: "Five months ago there were 300 U.S. firms registered with the embassy's commerce section. Today there are 500."

Their names are instantly recognisable. Coca-Cola, Marlboro, Runk Xerox and computer manufacturers Lotus Development.

There are some 15 international law firms that have opened offices in Russia. With names such as "Baker And McKenzie."

And although vodka is still the favourite tipple for every occasion, things must be getting serious — if as one Russian defence correspondent says: "Russian generals only drink gin tonic now."

It has only been two years since the former Soviet Union collapsed in the face of momentous changes in the former East Bloc. But the American way of life now has a firm foothold particularly among the young.

U.S. soap operas are television favourites, and videos of U.S. box-office

hits such as Basic Instinct and Terminator vie for top place in the ratings with recordings of U.S. series dating from the 1960s.

They are a vital reference-point for dedicated followers of fashion among Russia's nouveau riche, who drive Pontiac cars, sport shades and wear shoulder-padded jackets.

Young people with less cash to spare, but keen not to be outdone in the fashion stakes, make do with pointed cowboy boots bought at knock-down prices and dubbed "Kazuki" and bomber-jackets emblazoned with various inscriptions.

In the discos of Saint Petersburg, Moscow, or Nijni-Novgorod, today's observers would be hard pushed to distinguish between a young American

visitor or a Russian clad in sneakers dancing wildly to the latest "rave" hits.

Even Red Army chaps have had their noses put out of joint by Bogdan Titmir, a Russian "rap" artist who has swiftly become a teenage favourite, and whose songs are played endlessly on the new FM radio stations.

American slang is also

pervading the Russian language. Sergei, clad in un-laced Nike sneakers, with a Walkman at his ear blaring out songs by the pop group Guns And Roses, is sitting in front of his big mac.

Turning to his friend Dima he asks: "How many 'bucks' did your necklace cost?" — taking care to use the Russian declension of the word "bucks."

Thoughts for this week

A society in which men recognise no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few — Judge Learned Hand, American jurist (1872-1961)

What man strives to preserve, in preserving himself, is something which he has never been at any particular moment — George Santayana, Spanish-American philosopher (1863-1952).

Green is the colour

By Jean-Claude Elias

What do deodorants, automobiles, and personal computers (PC) have in common? They're all turning into green. Not literally of course. Green here means environment-friendly.

In the last few years, the preservation of the environment has, quite rightly, become a major issue in many a field. The chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) used in aerosols and refrigerants, responsible of the ozone layer depletion, is being gradually replaced or discarded whenever possible. Car manufacturers are investing heavily into research in order to limit the air pollution caused by the vehicles exhaust system.

The hunting of endangered animal species, the deforestation and countless other examples have caught the public opinion and caused a worldwide awareness about action that must be urgently taken to protect our planet.

It was therefore no surprise that computer manufacturers did their part and started to contribute to the general effort. One might however stop and think — aren't PCs environment-friendly by nature?

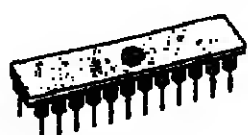
After all, they do not pollute the air and run on clean electricity. What could Gateway, Dell, HP, IBM, Olivetti, Compaq, Acer and the hundreds of other manufacturers add to their products to make them safer, healthier, greener?

The kind of pollution generated by computers is not obvious. It only becomes evident if one takes into consideration the amazing number of PCs now in function and the even greater number expected to be operational by the end of the century. In countries like the United States computers are on every table in every office. They'll soon outnumber the telephone sets.

The noise that PCs generate and the power they consume to work become serious issues, once the values per unit are multiplied by the number of operating machines. Printers are even worse. Dot-matrix, impact printers are still extremely noisy while laser printers are virtually silent but produce ozone while printing.

In 1993, manufacturers started to address these problems and came up with simple, plain, but partial solutions. No miracles here. The idea is to make the hardware consume less energy, generate less acoustic noise and less electrical interferences. An annual

chip talk



improvement of eight to ten per cent is being introduced by major manufacturers. Factory packing, naturally, is done with recyclable paper and cardboard. Makers of low cost computers in the Far East do not usually care about such problems. Not yet at least.

Laser printers are now fitted with an ozone filter that must be periodically replaced. Some computer monitors (screens) can switch themselves off automatically if not in use for a certain time. Low radiation screens are slowly but surely becoming a standard. Advanced hard disk drives can run on as low as five watts.

A quality PC is rated at an average 80 watts power. A Taiwanese clone will need about 100, and a new, green computer would be satisfied with 60 watts. Take the 40 watts difference between a green PC and a power-hungry Taiwanese clone, multiply it by the millions of small computers in use worldwide and you have a frightening energy bill. Specialised magazines report that researchers are aiming at PCs working on as little as 40 watts.

One field where PCs are already environment friendly is the amount of paper they save. There have been times, in the mid-eighties when idealists were dreaming of the totally paperless office. It proved to be an unrealistic theory. Nevertheless, the fact that a good part of the data saved on computer's hard disk can be visualised on the screen for information, without being necessarily printed out on hard copy is certainly saving a few trees (or even forests) every year.

PCs are probably somewhere at the bottom of the environment problems list that need to be addressed. There is little doubt however that every little bit, every contribution counts. The efforts that computer manufacturers are putting to make their products even "greener" should be an example to other industries.

Light vs journey into night

By E. Yaghi

As she marched forward towards her exam, Carol took the time to admire the white painted smooth trunks of the majestic tall pines whose odour reminded her of those mountain trees in her home country far across the ocean, the yet green grass and the faithful old clock that struck away the minutes and hours of her life at the university. Today was her last exam for the first semester of her third year of studies and then she could go home and collapse and do nothing but be a housewife and mother. It was unusually bright for a winter's day in Jordan and the weather, mild. And there should be no excuse for the nervousness she felt as her heart throbbed and a sharp pain quietly bore into her temples in mortification of the upcoming exam. As she approached the Faculty of Arts, she hesitantly entered the glass door and ascended the stairs that led to the classroom where she would be tested along with all her fellow sufferers for the knowledge that they had all sustained (or memorized at the last minute) during the semester.

A group of girls clustered near the lecture hall and one of her young friends stared at Carol and questioned, "oh, your eyes are so red. You look tired!"

She nodded agreement and responded, "yes, I am. I'm very glad this is my last exam for the semester. I'm going to go home and enjoy just being a housewife and mother for a change. I'll even get a kick out of stuffing cabbage leaves. No more worrying about studying or cramming for tests for three glorious weeks!"

They spent the rest of the time before the professor's arrival checking over points concerning the drama course they were taking. Carol knew they were all as nervous as she and she couldn't help having this motherly protection for her young colleagues and at the same time, felt thankful for their shared friendship for it was this experience of unity that helped make university life bearable for her as an older student.

As quick as a whip the professor bounded up the stairs with a large brown envelope containing exam papers. "That's it," one student stated. "We'd better get to our places before he begins handing out the tests." And all the students queued into their classroom for their final gathering.

Carol sat down and stared into space like the walking dead. When her professor approached, he handed her a blank paper and she felt it resembled her mind — nothing. She hastily wrote her name, year of study, faculty and student number in the upper right hand corner and waited for the essay question. Within minutes, she received the complicated question and began to scratch down on a draft paper, all the items she could remember about related ideas in order not to forget anything, but even inspite of this effort, some relevant matters slipped her nervous thoughts. In the ensuing quiet that oppressed like the silence of a dark grave, Carol and the others composed their complicated thesis statements and topic sentences concerning the realm of drama and all the plays that they had taken during the semester. Some plays were from the Theatre of Confrontation, some from the Theatre of the Absurd, and some were social commitments about modern man

and just where did he fit in according to his environment, his fellow man and yes, even himself. What had she gained from this course, she thought besides a lot of reading?

After she completed her paper and checked it over for any mistakes and forgotten information, she delivered it to one of the monitors and left the room as if it were a court and she a defendant on trial for a crime. What had she really gained from her drama course and from her education in general she pondered as she walked a daze out of the university towards the underground tunnel. One of the playwrights, Eugene O'Neill wrote a play entitled, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Life was really a long day's journey into night and man's struggle for existence is absurd after all. Weak humans battle for survival against a sometimes hostile and indifferent universe. And here she was, an older student fighting for what exactly? Had she grown used to the stares of alienated others at the university who seemed to mock her, or snicker at her efforts or the least, wonder what in the world she was doing there? No, she answered herself, she could never get used to those questioning looks, but she must carry on towards that goal, the golden ray at the end of the dark tunnel for education is light, and ignorance is darkness and it was her duty to herself, her society and even her duty to fight for her education. What had she benefited? Knowledge itself and a broader, more comprehensive outlook on life, for it was in the dark cave of Hira in year 570 A.D. that the Prophet Mohammad received the first message from the Angel Gabriel to "read in the name of thy Lord who created man, out of a mere clot of blood." And this began the Islamic awakening and this for knowledge, a thirst which Carol cherished and endeavored to quench for the responsibility became the search for light and truth falls upon every Muslim whether male or female and which should be an end quest until death.

Neon lights provided brightness in the underground tunnel. Carol hurried over its shiny marble flooring up its steps to the other side where she stopped a moment and got in. On the way home, she watched an old man walking along with the support of a cane and she saw people gathered together waiting for a bus and then a car stopped at the traffic lights where she could observe a row of new buildings undergoing construction.

And there she thought: "It's not just a matter of being a success in every subject, that's important, but it's a matter of the struggle for knowledge and to try one's best. True success is to overcome weakness and education is an asset that improves one's self, family and society. It provides a transition from narrow-mindedness to a broader way of thinking where an educated must surely come to realise that life transcends that inflated egoist who sees little beyond his own self to a more humble vision that each person is but a minute particle in a vast cosmic order but perhaps that line grain of sand upon the beach can make a difference."

Once home, Carol threw down her bag, her books and the headache of the exams to return to her kitchen, her family and the most important question of the day: "Hi Mom! What's for lunch?"

City recycling

— "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

— "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."

(from Alice in Wonderland)

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

The involvement of the layperson in the design of a city is not a new role. When the first settlements began to develop from a cluster of dwellings into a village, into a town, and then into a city, the inhabitants' involvement in the process forced the adaptations. Settlements have always had to conform to the new and changing needs of the dwellers.

Our citizens, whether policy makers or constituents, have simply never been educated to see their own roles, professions and businesses as inherent parts of cities as a whole. Nor have they the tools to assess the importance of an urban element with respect to other factors, to propose areas of compromise, to understand the major interfaces of activities within the city, or to design and implement innovative urban concepts.

If we wish to plan for city recycling, the needs of a city must be evaluated in terms of an existing functional context and must be juxtaposed against the existing

fabric of the city. This will involve whole communities looking at the imprints of history on the architecture and examining the patterns of growth of a city if they are to understand their own demands and needs for the future. These communities also have to accept that this notion of recycling cities and the preservation of architecture is a much larger issue than simply that of preserving city streets or buildings as works of art. The first step along this path, should we choose to proceed, is to establish a dialogue between the professionals and the communities they serve.

The development of effective programmes for the environment, including urban and rural change, requires a combined approach to planning, design and implementation. Urban design, since its inception as a profession in the 1950s, attempted to address these disciplines and to replace specialisation with an increased awareness of the many related areas of study.

The problems resulting from the rapid urbanisation throughout the world have made it urgent to retrain architects and planners to deal with large scale design problems with, inter alia, an ecological awareness. Although the intent is not to turn an architect into a geographer or an economist, or a planner into a sociologist, but to aspire to an interdisciplinary approach wherein the retrained professional, whether architect or planner, is the requisite generalist.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

TIME FOR RIB-TICKLING READING

- ★ A DO-NOTHING is a shiftless or habitually inactive, lazy person who fails to make positive progress.
- ★ He's well known as a miracle worker — it's a miracle when he works.
- ★ His boss is giving him a raise. His snoring keeps the rest of the employers awake.
- ★ He works eight hours and sleeps eight hours. His boss is firing him because they are the same eight hours.
- ★ Doctors have diagnosed his case as one of laziness, in an advanced stage of idling, with acute symptoms of workphobia, and feunemia of activity.
- ★ Asked whether he has any romantic notions, his wife says sadly, "maybe he has notions, but no motions."
- ★ His wife is buying him an appropriate gift (something timely and striking) an alarm clock.
- ★ During an earthquake alert, he sat up waiting for the shock to shake down his folding bed.
- ★ He can fall asleep even while running for a bus.

SAY IT IN ARABIC

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

- God bless you. Barakal'ahu feek.
- He is the son of my bosom. Howa ibni al-mahboob.
- He is a kind-hearted man at the bottom. Innahu rajul shafuq al-qalb fil-haqiqah.
- He was brought up to tell the truth. Nasha'a al-takattom bit-haq.
- He looks as if butter would not melt in his mouth. Yabdo annahu salem an-niya.
- Poverty cast him down. Adnahul-faqr.
- He is cut out of everything. Horima min koll shay.
- Every bullet has its billet. Lan yosebokum elta ma kataba Allahu lakum.

HUMOUR

- ★ GUIDE: "This citadel has been erected 300 years ago without any further change or restoration."
- ★ TOURIST: "It seems that he's the same owner in whose building we live."

☆☆☆☆

- ★ Bernard Shaw asked a lady to dance with him. She apologized.
- ★ Inquiring about the reason, she said: "I don't dance with any man unless he has a future."
- ★ He smiled without uttering a word. Then she turned to ask him: "Why do you want to dance with me in particular?"

☆☆☆☆

"Because I don't like to dance with a woman that has a past," answered Shaw.

☆☆☆☆

★ JACK: "Do you know why God has created a big head for the lion?"

FRIEND: "So as not to let loose through the bars of the cage in which it is entrapped."

☆☆☆☆

★ A parasite passed some people while having their dinner. Catching sight of him, they closed the doors behind him. Noticing this he climbed the wall and sarcastically said to them:

"You've stopped me on earth, but I came to you from heaven."

☆☆☆☆

ARABIC NAMES & THEIR MEANINGS

- AMJAD (mas.) — A person honoured and glorified by God; more distinguished, illustrious.
- MAJDI (mas.) — Laudable; praiseworthy. MAJIYA (fem.)
- MAJEED (mas.) — Celebrated, exalted; noble.
- MAJED (mas.) — Famous; glorious. MAJEDA (fem.)
- MAHER (mas.) — Proficient; skilled; expert; a good swimmer.
- MA'MOUN (mas.) — Trustworthy; reliable.
- MU'AYYAD (mas.) — One supported by others.
- MALEK (mas.) — Landlord; property owner.
- MUKHTAR (mas.) — Selected; mayor (omdeh).

PERPLEXITIES

(A) HALF-MINUTE PROBLEM

My wife and I are very fond of oranges, which she buys in the market every Saturday.

"How did you get on today?" I asked her at Saturday.

"Well," she replied, "I bought a certain number of 12 a shilling and a like number at 20 a shilling, so I've averaged 16 a shilling."

Was she right?

☆☆☆☆

(B) FROM PLACE TO PLACE

Below will be seen the names of certain countries and towns. By DROPPING a letter from each or without dropping but just rearranging the letters, you can get the name of another place.

1. MALI.
2. CHINA.
3. AMMAN.
4. AQABA.
5. AZRA.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Jan. 20

8:20 Flesh & Blood

9:00 Da Beat's On

Our weekly pop show, with the latest from the music charts... with host Muhammad Al Jazireh.

9:30 Faces & Places

A local programme, presented by Ruba Assaf

10:00 News In English

10:20 Movie Of The Week — Empty cradle

Starring: Kate Jackson and Jona Blechman

As the police is asked to investigate the sudden death of a mother in labour, they come across a case in hospital involving stealing newborn babies.

Friday, Jan. 21

8:30 Walter & Emily

9:10 G.P.

Thicker Than Water

10:00 News In English

10:20 The River Kings

Shawn is looking for his

mother and brothers who seem to have left because of hardships. By accident he meets a man who tells him he is his father.

11:10 Comedy

11:10 Yes Minister

Saturday, Jan. 22

8:30 The Fanelli Boys

9:00 Local Programme

9:10 The Campbells

Sentence Of The Court

James sets to collect evidence to prove Andrew is innocent of the murder charge.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Mountain Family Robinson

Starring: Robert Logan

The continuing story of The Wilderness Family with more adventures and accidents, and new fears from being evicted from their land.

Sunday, Jan. 23

8:30 You Bet Your Life

The weekly quiz show, hosted by Bill Cosby.

8:55 Jordanesque

A look back at the history of Jordan, the people who lived here through the different eras... and the people who ruled them.

9:15 The Power Game

The Presidency

This episode shows how the media in the U.S. helps the president build a certain image, favourable to the public.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Island Son

Sometimes They're Zebras

Daniel helps Dr. Charlie overcome his disappointment in himself when he fails to function in the operating theatre — a place he had asked to be transferred to.

11:10 The Golden Palace

A deadly encounter with a food critic invited by Rose to check the food at the hotel.

Monday, Jan. 24

8:30 The Turkeltons

9:10 Thirtysomething

Hopeless

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Fire And Desire

Starring: Barbara Stanwick

Tuesday, Jan. 25

8:30 The Respected Family

9:10 Mann And Machine

10:00 News In English

10:20 The Cape Rebel

11:10 Night Court

Dan is said to have fathered a son he never knew. The case proves to be one of "mistaken identity."

Wednesday, Jan. 26

8:30 Too Close For Comfort

The Remaking Of Monroe

Monroe undergoes a change in character after taking a course in character psychology. He almost loses Henry's friendship.

9:10 The Ozone Alarm

10:00 News In English

10:20 Day One

Following the seizure of the German files and secrets on the nuclear bomb, President Truman orders the drop of the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombs.

The magical theatre of Jeanne Moreau

"At 15, I was in love with Napoleon. I dreamt we met on a lift. He made love to me and then he left me. ...Poor Napoleon." — Jeanne Moreau, from the 1962 movie *Jules Et Jim*.

By Hillel Italie
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The words of Jeanne Moreau seem less like quotes for an interview than like scenes from her own long-running movie. It's partly her voice, deep and moody as an old torch song. It's partly what she does with the words, shaping details into narrative, narrative into metaphor.

Most of all, it's watching the actress perform that makes you forget you're in a hotel and not seated in some magical theatre. Picture her, frowning and arching an arm over her head. Imagine her gathering her thick, sandy hair and lifting it like a veil, as if daring you to gaze into the face of a woman no longer young.

"I remember we were shooting *The Sailor From Gibraltar* (released in 1967) in a small town near Naples," said the 65-year-old French actress.

"I lived in a hotel near the beach and there was beautiful sunshine outside. I wasn't shooting that day and I could allow myself to stay in bed a little later. I decided to pluck my eyebrows, and the shutters were half closed and the sun was coming up and I had that magnifying mirror and I started..."

Moreau pauses, her mouth ajar, the tips of her fingers brushing against her cheeks.

"God, that's a wrinkle," and on and on. "Yes, it is a wrinkle." ...For about a week, suddenly, I have the real feeling of decay — that's what life is about.

"And, you know, I speak to myself. I have an inner voice, and the inner voice said, 'well, and so what? So you think you're exceptional. Like anybody, you're going to die. So what is important? Is it the path you have to follow or a bloody wrinkle?' Well, OK, the voice is right: Let's go

on." At the time, Moreau was one of the world's most popular actresses, the downward corners of her mouth the brooding symbols of the French new wave. In an eight-year period, 1959-67, her directors had included Orson Welles, Luis Bunuel, Louis Malle and Francois Truffaut, most famously in *Jules Et Jim*.

Her looks and her impulsive characters led some to call her the "French Bette Davis," but she could be as enigmatic as Garbo, as detached as Dietrich, as romantic and vulnerable as Ingrid Bergman.

On screen, Moreau often played women of experience. They had taken chances and would take them again. Off screen, the actress had so many lovers she once boasted to a reporter she wanted to build a house and fill it with her favourite men.

In the 1970s and '80s, her popularity as an actress faded and she tried — with mixed success — writing and directing. Now, Moreau finds herself called a "legend." The label can suffocate, as if her real life

were finished, as if all that remained were memoirs and honorary awards.

But happily, her career has picked up. She won a Cesar, the French equivalent of the Academy Award, as a nymphomaniac in *La Vieille Oui Marchait Dans La Mer*, released in France in 1991. She made a brief appearance in the international hit *La Femme Nikita* and provided narration for *The Lover*. She also plans on directing again.

In her latest movie, *Summer House*, fans have an extended chance to catch up with the great Moreau. She stars as the brash, unpredictable Lili, an Anglo-Egyptian with flaming red hair who arrives in a conservative London suburb and seeks to rescue a friend's daughter from an unfortunate marriage.

It's easy to imagine Lili as the happy sequel to many of Moreau's younger characters. She has broken so many rules she seems to have forgotten what she was supposed to obey. She has that casual confidence that comes from discovering she's more capable of shocking the world than of

being shocked in return.

"She's an actress and she's like a naughty little girl," Moreau said of Lili, breaking into an affectionate, naughty little smile.

"At a certain age, you're forbidden to have sex and then you can have it. Then, you have to get married and you have to work, make money, pay your income taxes, give children to society, be a grandmother and a grandfather and then you have to retire and get ready for bed."

"I mean, it's a disaster. You live to be 75 and what real action are you allowed and how much time?"

Born in Paris in 1928, Moreau as a child was known as "the girl who didn't stay behind the door."

Through much of the 1950s, she appeared on stage and in "B" movies before making her breakthrough film, *Les Amants*. One scene was so erotic for the time that it led to the end of Moreau's affair with director Louis Malle and to the French government's nearly banning the film.

"Action is very exhilarating," the actress said, "and at the same time very up-



Jeanne Moreau

rooting. What we like is to be tranquil. Time passes by, passing by, the movement, the pace of time, but surely there are moments when you just like to hold on: 'Please keep quiet. Let's stop a moment.' It's impossible and some people force themselves to stop every-

thing around them. "That's why I was impressed when I was young, when I saw some people aging so badly. They just decided the world may move on, but they wouldn't. They reminded me of some villages in France. There is a main road

crossing the village and at the end of day when the sun goes down, the people are sitting in chairs and watching the cars just passing by. "And I find that so terrible. Luckily, my nature is... to go forward, to take risks. That means sometimes I am scared stiff."

Armstrong, Sinatra back in boxed sets

By Samuel Fromartz
Reuters

NEW YORK — Start spreading the news. Satchmo and ol' blue eyes are back in elaborate boxed sets that do justice to the masters of jazz and popular song.

Louis Armstrong was the father of jazz whose "firsts" make a stunning list — he invented jazz improvisation, was the first to "scat" in song, and has remained the only entertainer to have his spanning 62 years.

He was the rare artist who was also an entertainer, a virtuoso on his instrument and creator of mass hits, from *Body And Soul* to *Hello Dolly*, the last jazz tune to top the charts by knocking off the Beatles in 1964.

Now, what is arguably the best work of Armstrong has been reissued by a small company that has set the ultimate standard in the recording industry. Mosaic Records.

Mosaic focuses on the best period of an artist, and the 1949 and 1958 recordings on the Decca label show a musician at the height of his powers.

Armstrong influenced everyone who came after him. The debt is more than evident in the work of Frank Sinatra, whose early Columbia recordings of 1943 to 1952 were just reissued on 12 compact disks.

Mosaic's Armstrong material is filled with gems, but the core of it is the wondrous "autobiography" sessions in which the master returned to his 1920s work that established his place in the annals of jazz.

The 1926-1928 hot five and hot seven sessions have also been reissued on Columbia, but in Armstrong's revisit in the 1950s, there is arguably a richer feel, if only because the artist had matured and the technology was vastly improved.

The Mosaic set comes with a booklet, with photographs from the period, written by Dan Morgenstern of the Institute of Jazz Studies in Newark, New Jersey, who puts the all star recordings in perspective.

The Mosaic set becomes a sort of interactive process that lets you expand your horizons, for as you play the record you can read the perceptive notes that Morgenstern has provided on each and every one of the 81 songs in this collection.

The "autobiography" section includes incredible

recordings of *Lazy River*, *I Can't Give You Anything But Love*, *King Of The Zulus* and *When Your Smiling* — a gem of a tune.

GRP has also reissued the live Decca all star recordings from the same period. Where the Mosaic set presents the artistry of Armstrong, the live set offers a view of an entertainer at his heights working an audience.

The material proves that Armstrong was a master against which everyone else must be measured, for he created a musical language that has been used by everyone else since. From Miles Davis to Roy Hargrove.

His emphasis on telling a dramatic, musical story with a rhythmic tinge also had a huge impact on Sinatra, who applied it to popular song with dazzling success.

While a lot of press recently has focused on Sinatra's duet album with a host of pop stars, the early Columbia recordings show a man quickly moving up the ladder to become "chairman of the band."

Columbia is marketing the set in a black wood box, with a frosted glass picture of Sinatra on the front, that nearly puts the entire package over the edge.

The Sinatra Columbia recordings are exhausting in their scope and amount to a compendium of popular American song by its foremost master.

But unlike Mosaic, which focuses on the best work of an artist, Columbia gives the best — and the rest.

The recordings chart the relationship with arranger and conductor Axel Stordahl, who added strings to the hand behind Sinatra and let him soar.

Even in 1945, at age 30, Sinatra had perfected his style, stretching notes and adding his special romantic touch to *If You Were But A Dream* and *I Fall In Love Too Easily* or the haunting tune, *Someone To Watch Over Me*.

Listening to these decades later, you can see why teenage girls mobbed his concerts in the '40s and '50s and fainted at the sound of his voice.

The 143-page book issued with the recordings should be Grammy-winning, for the extensive session notes running 90 pages — filled with pictures, album art, and posters — give a flavour of the period and add depth to the material.

For the Sinatra fan, this set is pure gold.

Dancer recalls wartime days of high kicks and sadness

By Peter Millership
Reuters

BOURNEMOUTH, England — Nearly half a century after allied troops landed in France to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany, Betty Hockey still thinks of the young airmen and soldiers she knew, and those who never came back.

On D-Day (June 6, 1944), the former dancer, now aged 77, and her troupe performed for U.S. airmen at their base at Hnmesley in southern England. There was an air of expectation because of the troop movements.

"We were singing *The Star-Spangled Banner* when the boys joined in and just took it away," said Hockey. "I still hear their voices ringing in my ears, even now, and I wonder how many were shot down."

Hockey, one of the organisers of this year's 50th anniversary of D-Day, is in regular touch with veterans, including former members of the U.S. Air Force 397th

Bomb Group.

"They've adapted me and I go to their reunions," said Hockey, an honorary citizen of Maryland in the United States.

The 16-member "Non-stop Troop Show" was typical of the voluntary groups travelling Britain to entertain three million allied soldiers stationed there.

Hockey's memories are of scrounging costumes, fuel and props, performing on rickety stages in muddy fields or from the back of a truck, during the hula-hula dance with grass skirts or scenes from the desert.

"The can-can was the mainstay and very popular with the boys, but I also did the dance of the seven veils and the fun dance until the feathers dropped off the fan," she said. "We had to make do with what we could."

One admirer described the act as: "Slick, well dressed, saucy, though never 'dirty'." He said: "it was

not difficult to get volunteers on stage."

Hockey told of playing to an audience of British prisoners of war who had just come back from Japanese camps.

"The memory of those boys haunts me even to this day, some with front teeth missing from rifle butt blows," she said.

The troupe once mistakenly drove into a camp where German prisoners were being held. As they were turning to leave, a British officer pleaded with them to perform for what he called "a jolly nice set of chaps."

Hockey swore him to secrecy and only told the story decades after.

Their group, ferried around in four cars, performed about four times a week, which was difficult because most of the cast had daytime jobs. They gave a total of about 1,000 shows within a 40-mile (65 km) radius of the southern town of Bournemouth.

Sometimes playing to

garrisons with fully-equipped theatres, they also played to small units under canvas amidst the mud of the New Forest, which provided cover from German spy planes.

A big problem was late night fog. Signposts had been removed in case of invasion and narrow slits on car headlamps made it hard to see. One trick was to drive with the door open to use the side of the road to guide them.

Hockey fondly remembers the chow (food) tent in the U.S. camps which were oases in the performers, used to food rationing. "We were each given a huge slice of bread topped with a tremendous steak. Never had we seen such food."

The troupe was always showered with chewing gum, nylon stockings, sweets, cigarettes and food.

Looking out of sea from Bournemouth Beach, Hockey said wistfully: "We all had such awfully good fun but it seems such a long time ago."

Former royal dancer tries to revive the art after Khmer Rouge

By Sheila McNulty
The Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — There was a time when only in the dark of the night, cloaked in the privacy of her mosquito net, could Chea Samy risk performing the delicate, graceful movements of Cambodia's classical dance.

It was the mid-1970s, when the Communist Khmer Rouge were in power and purging artists to wipe out the country's cultural heritage, which it considered a feudal remnant. Chea Samy was forced to resist in secret, crouched on her knees in the confines of her net.

All the while, she feared she might be caught and killed by the Khmer Rouge, and the dance of Cambodia royal court — the very embodiment of the gentle Cambodian character — would be wiped out.

The world, she feared, would then remember her people only as "barbarous and disrespectful like the Khmer Rouge."

By the time the Khmer Rouge's 1975-1978 rule had ended, all but a very few classical dancers and instructors had been killed.

along with hundreds of thousands of other Cambodians.

Chea Samy vowed to revive the art.

Now 75, Chea Samy has for 12 years been in charge of annually teaching classical dance to hundreds of students at the University of Fine Arts. Her plump face fills with anguish as she worries that she might die before fully reviving the tradition.

Twice a week she teaches at the University for the equivalent of \$10 a month. The classes only heighten her distress.

"I see students that cannot dance like the star dancers of the past," she says. She offers extra tutoring at her unpainted, wooden home surrounded by rice fields on the outskirts of the city. A handful of acolytes seem always to be there, eager for one more lesson.

"No other teacher can compare with her," says 15-year-old Uk Phala. "She has taught us many dances — dances from her soul. We students will not forget."

But Sam Tart, 66, says the students cannot possibly learn all that Chea Samy has to teach. He plays the

small, oblong Cambodian classical drum for the classes, as he did for those taught by Chea Samy decades earlier in the royal palace. Sam Tart says it is clear these students are less skillful than those of the past.

"Now (Chea Samy) is making a great effort to teach," Sam says. "I'm really sorry, though, because when she dies I am sure she will take some dances with her."

The classical royal dance that Chea Samy teaches dates to the height of Cambodian civilisation, more than 1,000 years ago. It has been passed only among the select, in hopes of keeping it from being corrupted by folk versions.

Chea Samy was one of the privileged few of her generation taught the strong yet dainty steps taken on bent knees and with upturned toes, the arm movements with fingers bent back and delicately fanned.

From the time Chea Samy's potential was recognised at the age of 6, she lived in the royal palace, studying dance for three hours a day and performing for Cambodia's royal circle

and foreign dignitaries.

At age 28 she began teaching the 300-member royal troupe, often touring abroad with her students over the next 27 years, until the Khmer Rouge seized control under the command of a man she had helped raise as a youth — her brother-in-law, Pol Pot.

When he was chased from power in 1978, Chea Samy and her husband left the killing fields for Phnom Penh, where Chea Samy was asked by the new government to revive the ancient dance.

"I said I would help until I couldn't stand up anymore," she recalls. "I cannot let the Cambodian culture get lost, not even a little bit of it."

Chea Samy's first 20 students were malnourished and weak after years of forced labour. "I felt like I was training monkeys," she says. "They were all thin and shapeless."

It took two years before her students were able to convey the dance's graceful strength. Then the government presented her with several assistants, who also had been members of the royal dance troupe, and 200 more students.

A night at the Royal Opera, Japan style

By Eric Talmadge
The Associated Press

TOKYO — With a gaggle of ladies in waiting watching, over her shoulder, Empress Michiko peers down from the palace music hall's royal box at a vivid green stage laden with lutes, flame-shaped drums and silk-stringed zithers.

A curtain in the back of the chamber is drawn quietly, and a dozen musicians clad in dusky red kimonos and head wear made of stiff black gauze enter slowly, deliberately.

The glittering, standing-room-only crowd falls silent when three of the musicians lift small, crown-like clusters of bamboo to their lips. With their next breath, the haunting, hypnotic sounds of ancient Asia come to life.

Welcome to a night at the opera, Japan style.

As the official program hoists, the imperial musicians' repertoire, like their attire, is about as classical as classical could be. Its roots, the audience is informed, go back to the Chinese and Korean royal courts of nearly 1,000 years ago.

Even the names of the compositions and their accompanying dances sound somehow ancient — *The Court Of Emperor Nin*, *Celebrations Of The Prosperous Bamboo*, *The Song Of The Spring Nightingale*.

But, old as it may be, to the listener more attuned to European classical music (Bach, Mozart or Beethoven), this is a very new world of sound.

"I learned how to play Western-style music on the piano before auditioning here," Toshiharu Togi, head of the Palace Music Department, joked after a recent performance.

"It didn't help me a bit," he said. "The word means splendid music — generally begin with a selection of short, delicate instrumental pieces played on wind, string and percussion instruments. Next came a culmination of instruments and chant-like vocals."

The music also frequently is commixed with "dances of the left" and "dances of the right," which are performed in wooden masks and ornate costumes of bright

orange or green silk. Possibly gagaku's most striking aspect is its stress on rich and often eerie harmonies that build and fade in a steady procession of deep, vibrant sounds.

There is no conductor, and no sheet music before the musicians on stage. When practicing, the troupe relies upon scores written in a cryptic system that varies with each instrument. Western scales are never used.

"It's very unscientific," Togi said as he thumbed through a score for the "Hachiriki," a reed instrument that is his specialty. The score was written from top to bottom, right to left.

Togi, like most of the court musicians, comes from a family that has been playing for the royal family for centuries. Togi said his family's association with gagaku goes back to at least the 12th century.

Gagaku was created mainly for the entertainment of the gods or nobles, and a major part of the court troupe's routine today involves playing at palace shrines during imperial religious rituals.

But unlike their ancestors, court musicians these days must also be skilled in a Western instrument, since they double as the orchestra that plays during imperial banquets.

"A big difference between gagaku and the music of the West is that gagaku really wasn't written with an audience in mind," Togi said.

"If you want to please an audience, you have to come up with a catchy melody, an interesting beat. I'm afraid those are two things gagaku lacks."

Even so, the music is enjoying a quiet boom in popularity. Public performances given by the palace ensemble tend to be greeted by appreciative, sellout crowds.

Seeing the troupe, however, isn't easy.

The court musicians hold concerts only twice a year in the palace's tiny music hall, and attendance is limited to foreign diplomats, domestic dignitaries or those lucky enough to win a lottery-style selection process.

Otherwise, they can only be seen on their two annual road trips or twice-a-year performances at Tokyo's national theatre.

Hospitals in Gaza are ill

By Samia Nakhoul

Reuter

GAZA — To page a doctor at Gaza's Al Ahli Hospital, staff must rush to a square outside their offices to ring a church bell as old as the 1917 building.

"Electronic pagers, only one of the trappings of modern medical care missing in the Gaza Strip, are banned by Israel for security reasons," doctors say.

"When we want to page a doctor, we ring one bell, for a cleaner two, and for X-ray three bells," said Anis Abu Hashem, a staff nurse at the private Al Ahli facility.

Palestinian physicians, drained by six years of casualties from the uprising against Israel, hope the ailing health system will receive a desperately needed injection of money, medicine and modernisation when self-rule is born.

Limited Palestinian self-rule was due to have begun in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho

on Dec. 13 but was delayed by disputes with Israel, mainly over security.

Dr. Riyad Zaanoun, head of the Palestinian Health Council, said the building of new hospitals, renovation of old ones, purchase of equipment and training of specialised doctors abroad will have priority.

The hospitals are run by Israeli authorities and staffed by Palestinian doctors and nurses.

"All the experience they've got is from training and working with Israeli doctors," Zaanoun said. Critical cases like cardiology and sensitive surgery are taken to hospitals in Israel. Doctors said 20 people died last year because of lack of resources or while waiting for the Israeli military administration to approve their transfer.

"My father waited for two years and he died before he got permission to undergo heart surgery (in

Israel)," Mr. Abu Hashem said.

Israeli Health Ministry figures show that Israel spent \$5,000 per person for medical care in Israel-proper last year. The expenditure in Gaza was \$46 per capita.

A ministry spokesman attributed the gap to a higher percentage of people over the age of 65 in Israel — 10 per cent of the population compared with three per cent in Gaza.

Gaza, however, has one of the highest birthrates in the world — it grew by 4.3 per cent last year, the World Bank says.

Its infant mortality rate was 40 per 1,000 births in 1991 against a 10 to 1,000 ratio in Israel, the Health Ministry said.

Dr. Zaanoun, in charge of charting a health plan for Gaza, said there were only 16 incubators in the whole of the strip.

A human rights activist and Palestinian doctors said two infants who needed urgent operations died in

October before the Israelis cleared their transfer to more modern Israeli hospitals, despite letters from their Gaza physicians.

"The papers must take a day but it took them a week. Doctors said in their letter the infants' conditions were critical and that they needed to be operated urgently, but they did not take that into consideration," said Niv Gordon, the Israeli head of the Palestinian-Israeli Physicians For Human Rights.

Dr. Niv said however that the Palestinian doctors should have referred the infants earlier because they were born ill.

Abdul Hamid Thabet, a nurse at Shifa Hospital, said five infants died last year because of a shortage of incubators and ventilators. Hospitals piece together their own makeshift incubators to cope with premature babies.

"Infants are put on a table under a side-light lamp to give them some

heat. They should have the same heat degree as the womb of their mothers. This is the only way to save them. They may survive or die. It all depends on their strength," he said.

Shifa has only two artificial respiratory ventilators, not enough for the number of children who needed them. Mr. Thabet said an oxygen tube is used when the ventilators are occupied.

"This is a temporary way to save lives but it is not practical... Now both ventilators are being used. If we get a third case, the only thing we can do is to pump oxygen into his throat as a substitute. If he dies it will be his bad luck."

In many Gaza hospitals, lifts do not exist — and if they do, they usually do not work. Patients are carried on stretchers to surgery, at times a climb of several storeys.

Surgical scissors and tools are antiquities. Hygiene and sterilisation are poor.

Hospitals have no scanners, laboratories, medical records, computers or statistics. Patients' records are on papers that are thrown out when the stack gets too high. Cancer and biopsy tests are sent to laboratories in Israel.

It is rare to find more than one doctor on duty in most departments.

Since Israel occupied Gaza in 1967, the quantity of medicine and number of hospital beds has not increased, although the population grew from 360,000 to one million, Dr. Zaanoun said.

In 1967, there were 920 hospital beds in Gaza. Now there are 910. The Health Ministry said there are 2.5 hospital beds for every 1,000 people in Israel as opposed to 1.2 beds in Gaza.

"People here believe in fate and destiny. When a patient dies, the file is closed and no one questions the reason," Mr. Abu Hashem said.

In Canada, malpractice coverage is cheap

By Jeffrey Ulbrich

The Associated Press
TORONTO — Dr. Peter Newman practices family medicine in Toronto, taking care of aches and pains, stitching wounds and delivering babies. He pays \$2,322 a year for protection against malpractice claims.

If he worked in Chicago, where Americans sue at the drop of a tongue depressor, malpractice insurance would cost him \$48,718.

"It's startling," said Dr. Newman, whose general practice involves a broad mixture of adult internal medicine, pediatrics and office gynecology.

"When we get together and talk about such things, my colleagues express similar disbelief. Although we feel concern about the increase in malpractice litigation in Canada, it pales in comparison with what we see south of the border."

Malpractice insurance, and lawsuits, are big business in the United States and a factor in the high cost of American health care. In Canada, where the government-run system guarantees health care to every citizen, both payouts and premiums are considerably lower. So are doctors' incomes.

The provincial government, after negotiating with the Ontario Medical Association, decides what Dr. Newman can charge his patients. It puts a \$300,000 cap on his income, out of which he must pay office staff and overhead. He is quick to point out that most general practitioners are far below the \$300,000 cap.

In the United States, Dr. Newman could charge whatever the market would bear, and his insurance costs would be a major component.

"The United States is a system out of control," Richard Shekter, a Toronto lawyer and expert in health law, said of the multimillion-dollar awards in malpractice suits and resulting fat legal fees.

In Canada, malpractice protection is not technically insurance. Ninety per cent of the country's physicians, just over 57,000, are members of the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA), a mutual defence organisation founded in 1901.

"This is a grouping of physicians who pay membership fees, who have created a reserve from which they can be helped as the need arises," said Dr. Stuart Lee, secretary-treasurer of the association, which is run by physicians.

The organisation not only helps members with lawsuits, but with complaints from licensing bodies and other legal problems.

Unlike American insurers that impose limits, most frequently \$1 million per claim and a \$3 million maximum, the CMPA sets no limits. Nor does it settle cases out of court just to get rid of them. That tells plaintiffs that, when they tangle with doctors in Canada, they will have a fight on their hands.

Across the range of medical specialties, the differences in malpractice premiums, or membership fees, are startling.

In Canada, the lowest rate is about \$1,100, for a

family practitioner who does no obstetrics or surgery. The same category in the lowest-rate state in the United States would be about \$2,800.

A neurosurgeon or obstetrician in Toronto, Canada's largest city, pays a CMPA membership fee of \$12,700. If he practiced across the border in Michigan, malpractice insurance could cost him as much as \$215,000.

"When a doctor perceives there is a climate of medical litigation in the air, he is likely to start practicing medicine defensively, ordering more tests and investigations than medically necessary in order to protect himself if a case ever ends in court," Dr. Newman said. "That drives up costs."

Because about 100 companies issue malpractice insurance in the United States, it is difficult to obtain national figures. But the St. Paul Insurance Group, which covers about 20 per cent of American doctors, says it registered 14.1 claims per 100 physicians in 1992. North of the border, there are about two claims per 100.

In the United States, the average payout was \$200,000 as measured by the St. Paul and the Physician Insurers Association of America, compared to about \$28,000 paid by the CMPA.

The reasons have as much to do with legal systems as health systems.

There is no absolute right to a jury trial in Canada. Malpractice cases are nearly always tried by a judge only, on the theory that such cases are too complicated for laymen.

Perhaps more important, the Canadian Supreme Court has set a strict limit on general damages at the U.S. equivalent of \$183,000, and restricts the maximum range to patients totally incapacitated due to malpractice. Punitive damages are rare, and palsy when awarded.

In the United States, it is usually simple to set damages for lost wages and projected medical expenses. But damages for "pain and suffering" can depend on a jury's whim.

Very high awards are given in some Canadian cases, particularly where plaintiffs suffer loss of substantial incomes or require extensive future medical care, but the average payout is much lower.

Lawyers' fees based on the amount of the award often are held responsible for the aggressiveness in filing malpractice suits in the United States.

Such "contingency" fees are not permitted in Ontario, Canada's most populous province. Although most other provinces allow them, CMPA Director Lee says their effect is negligible.

This is true in part, he said, because the association's policy of not settling out of court discourages lawyers from gambling on weak cases.

In the United States, most malpractice cases never reach trial. Fear of a costly legal battle often prompts an insurance company to settle rather than fight.

Fertility issues boiling into dilemma

By Allen Nacheaman

Agence France Presse

LONDON — A 59-year-old British businesswoman gives birth to test-tube twins conceived in an Italian laboratory.

A black woman, desperate for a child and bereft of hope for a donor egg of her own race, asks a Cambridge fertility clinic to implant her with an egg from a white woman's ovary.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh are developing a technique to harvest eggs from aborted fetuses for in vitro fertilisation, a procedure that would produce children whose biological mothers were never born.

As 1994 got under way, British airwaves and op-ed

pages crackled with controversy over high-tech procreation. Terms such as "womb-robbing" and "designer babies" were being coined.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) found itself facing dilemmas it never imagined when it was created by parliament three years ago for regulating fertility clinics.

"We regard this area as one of tremendous complexity and controversy," said HFEA Chairman Colin Campbell of the eggs-from-fetuses concept.

"It is speculative. It is not possible at the moment. What we want to do is ask people how we should approach the subject if and when it becomes possible in a few years time," Mr.

Campbell said on a BBC Radio talk show.

"This won't be licensed in any circumstances unless it proves viable and the risks to the child are absolutely minimal," said Flora Goldhill, chief executive of HFEA, whose 18 members include an actress, a radio executive, a judge, university professors, clergymen and medical specialists.

The British Medical Association's (BMA) Ethics Committee also jumped into the fray, saying it was studying the rights and wrongs of culling eggs from aborted fetuses.

"The purpose of this technique is not so that doctors can play God... It is to help a small group of women who cannot have a baby," said committee

Chairman Stuart Horner, who added that he favoured the idea.

"We are merely trying to establish the ethical guidelines before the technology becomes available in the next 12 or 18 months,"

Roger Gosden, leading the research at Edinburgh, meanwhile said the project was being put on ice pending opinions by the BMA and HFEA. expected this month.

Peter Brinsden, head of the Bourn Hall Clinic in Cambridge where the black woman plans to be implanted with a Caucasian egg fertilised with her husband's sperm, called the controversy "a storm in a tea cup."

"We have a black woman with a husband of mixed

race," he said. "She has no eggs. They desperately want a child. She said, 'why can't we use a white egg?'"

"The child would be mixed race whether we used a white egg or one of her own if she had one, so all you are going to do by having a white woman's egg is have a slightly paler shade of coffee colour," said Dr. Brinsden.

The HFEA's Goldhill said she saw no problem with the particular case. "From what the clinic has told us, they are approaching it responsibly," she said.

But Jill Knight, head of the Conservative Party's Health Committee, called it "plain and unvarnished genetic engineering and as such must be unacceptable."

The case of the 59-year-old woman who bore twins in Britain after implantation in Italy came under fire from Liberal Democrat MP David Alton, who called for tougher legislation over such cases and termed the HFEA "a toothless tiger."

"The concept of designer babies made to the specification of race or gender or ability has grim echoes of

another generation," he told BBC Radio.

Britain Health Secretary Virginia Bottomley, commenting on the 59-year-old mother, said, "we cannot stop people going to any country in the world for treatment."

She was silent on reports that France was planning new laws to ban medical techniques which help post-menopausal women to bear children.

Anne Dobb of the anti-abortion group Life predicted there would be "a sense of public revulsion" over the culling of eggs from aborted fetuses.

But Alan Bailey of Gloucestershire told a BBC Radio call-in show: "My wife and I have been trying for a family for over 10 years, unsuccessfully."

"We have been waiting for a donor egg for some time. I am wholeheartedly in favour of research into what people are calling 'womb-robbing'."

"I feel a bit more hopeful now about having a family," said Bailey. "Time is running out for us and any option which offers help will be welcome."

U.S. study backs milk hormone

WASHINGTON (AP) — Less than a month before a congressionally imposed moratorium ends, the administration has reaffirmed its position that a genetically engineered milk-production hormone is safe.

"There is no evidence that BST poses a health threat to humans or animals," said a draft version of a report on recombinant bovine somatotropin (BST) by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

A summary of the report was obtained by the Associated Press. It gives little ammunition to those who oppose the drug for economic and health reasons.

"The net national economic impact of BST usage is expected to be positive," the report said.

The FDA approved St. Louis-based Monsanto's version of the drug on Nov. 5, ending a nine-year application process.

But Congress blocked the sale of BST for 90 days, or until Feb. 3, meanwhile. OMB studied the impact of BST on consumer attitudes and federal spending on dairy programmes.

The report said, "no significant reduction of demand for milk and dairy products is expected to result from BST use."

Consumers will pay less

for milk, the report said. And cheaper milk will also lower the cost of food stamps and a federal feeding programme for women, infants and children, the report said.

The report also said U.S. leadership in biotechnology "would be enhanced by proceeding with BST, and would be impeded if there were new government obstacles to such biotech products."

Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., led the fight for the moratorium on grounds the drug would cause economic hardship for dairy farmers in his state. He had urged a one-year moratorium.

He argued that consumers would reject BST milk at the same time cows were producing more, causing higher government surpluses and driving smaller producers out of business.

The report said that small — and large-scale dairy farmers who use BST probably would have higher income because they could produce more milk from fewer cows.

"BST favours good herd management rather than small or large farms," the report said.

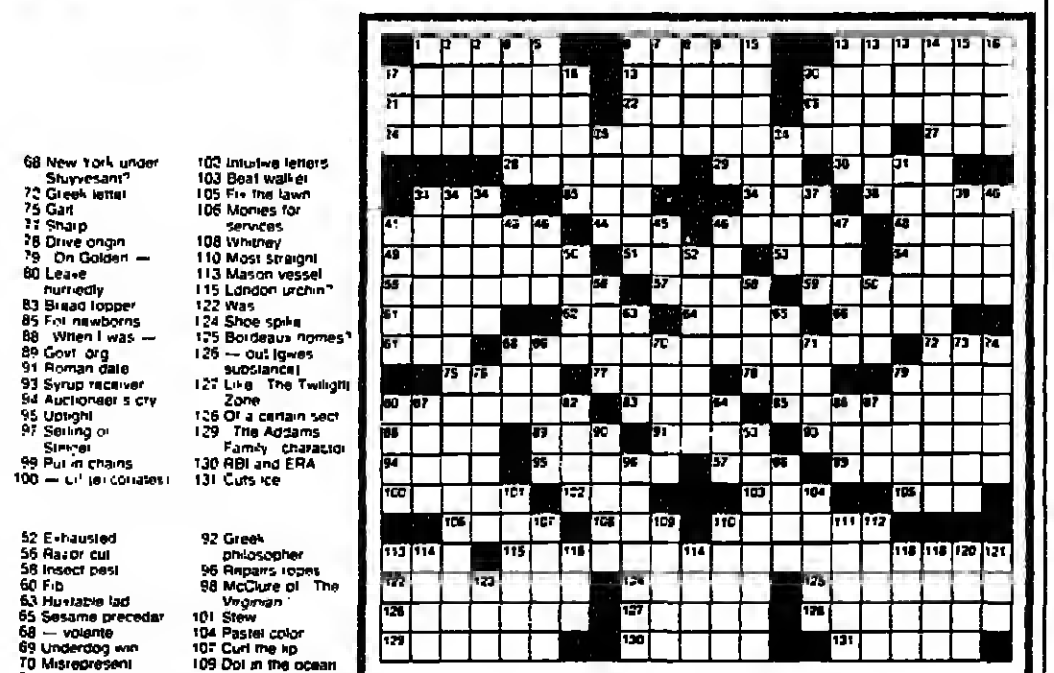
The report said BST would have little effect, if any, on U.S. dairy exports because nearly half the U.S. export volume goes to countries that have approved the drug.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

COUNTRY PAIR

By Harvey Estes

1 Across
1 Puts back on
2 One's feel
3 Warmth
4 Tattle
5 Detour
6 Cope partially
7 Veil material
8 Synagogue
9 Consolator
10 Champion of the people
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Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Health, wealth and happiness aren't owed us as rights. They are goals we try to pursue.
2. Carrying crumpled has connotations when she sees low-down corruption in high places.
3. If auto salesmen unite during inflation, customers can say goodbyes to good buys.
4. Though I use it often to measure my blood pressure, I'll be darned if I can pronounce sphygmomanometer.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. TX 45SYL45878U. SYL 9787S X7XL US58XU
128 SU 123 PLUS 45878 X24PL3.

—By Ed Huddleston

2. COZ MELVA RAVEKYV AC00 KIEK
AYVJMOVY E ACRI RELV. GK MYRCJYV
AC00 JCZVO.

—By Eugene T. Maloska

3. PUNNYPATTEUR EB FETAIANAYAR LYDU
FMEDAPUP EKM BUJRYFYUMR JAIL
HYCKTEUR IAPCAIR.

—By Frank N. Stein

4. TSPN SPEEDYOYZ OR TIHRD: HPEOX
HPEYOYZ IH APEOX ADHRD? —By Barbara J. Rugg

Diagramless 19 x 10, By Harold B. Counts

Across
1 Use 3 twice
2 To
3 Old card game
4 Employed
5 Concerning
6 Family members
7 Banning term
8 Rascals
9 Bulks
10 Forty
11 Skating area
12 Elbow
13 Assemblies
14 Carelessly
15 Goddess of
16 Great Lake
17 Fruit cover
18 Eat or pa
19 Groom with
20 Elaborate care
21 Wash cloth
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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

1. Health, wealth and happiness aren't owed us as rights. They are goals we try to pursue.

2. Carrying crumpled has connotations when she sees low-down corruption in high places.

3. If auto salesmen unite during inflation, customers can say goodbyes to good buys.

4. Though I use it often to measure my blood pressure, I'll be darned if I can pronounce sphygmomanometer.

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'Soft matter' — still a puzzle but with a lot of revolutionary applications

By Jean Chabrier

"Soft matter" includes all the complex molecular systems which are half-way between a liquid and a solid state and which are not just part of chemistry, physics or biology, but all three at the same time. It is a scientific puzzle, but it offers great possibilities to industry.

As ordinary techniques of calculation were totally unoperational for describing the interactions of the billions of molecules making up a polymer (a macromolecule) or the astonishing power of self-organisation of liquid crystals, new tools had to be invented in order to understand their collective behaviour.

When two molecules meet, they can only join together at one of their ends. But when a large number of molecules come together, there is a large number of combinations and the variety of structures that can result becomes extremely vast. They can take the form of tubes, micelles, bubbles, foams, gels, flakes or all kinds of complex substances.

There is no physical reasoning which can describe such a complex system. On the other hand, an intuitive concept of "creep" gives an idea of the process and makes it possible to explain the behaviour of a polymer through the nature of the molecules making it up (long or short, ramified or linear).

It all happens as if each molecule moved in a kind of tube defined by the neighbouring molecules, with the whole retaining enough flexibility to allow sufficiently slow deformations. The whole can

then be compared to an elastic tube whose dimensions can then be calculated.

The idea of "creep" is a concept which has already existed for about twenty years and which has been used by both biologists (DNA sequencing) and industrialists in plastic alloys whose final properties are better than those of the polymers making them up, taken individually. This is, for instance, the case with kevlar, cited here because it is well known, but hundreds of new products have thus come into being.

Many practical applications result from this work. By adding a polymerised additive, in a proportion of a few millionths, it is possible to double the distance attained by the jet of a fire-hose as the water molecules are imprisoned in a kind of sheath which maintains them together. This stabilises the jet and suppresses its instability. The same is true of hydro-carbon anti-fire foams, thanks to another soft matter.

But these kinds of micro-networks of molecules are also used in the most varied areas: cellular concrete, asphalt, insulation, lubricants (in particular car oils), emulsions for the oil or food industry, etc.

Another fine example is that of non-drip paint. It is really appreciated by anyone who has painted a ceiling. This result is obtained by mixing micro-particles of latex with the paint. The latex has been treated in such a way as to create a rather "special" crystal structure. An ordinary crystal only becomes liquid if it is submitted to enormous pressure. On the other hand, a latex crystal, which only owes its cohesion to

very weak force, is influenced by a tiny amount of pressure, for instance that of a paint roller which is enough to re-liquify the paint.

There is also the problem of adhesives. It is not yet very

well understood why they stick. De Gennes has shown that polymer glues adhere better than crystalline ones. For the latter, it is enough to break a few bonds between atoms on contact with the interface.

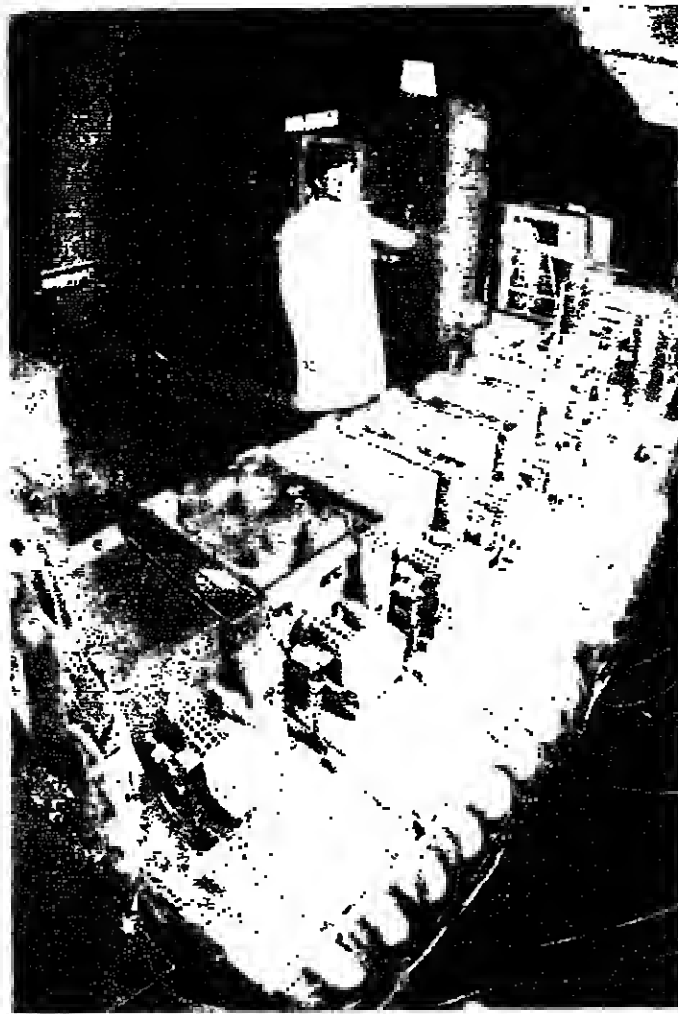
whereas, in the case of polymers, all the energy of the bonding is used all along the length of the molecule, which requires thousands of atomic bonds and considerable energy to break them.

But there are still many mysteries concerning glues and also gels, which are another problem-posing soft matter. Why does the molecular network of yoghurt lose all cohesion from a certain speed of filling up the pots?

One may also be puzzled by the "nematic" and "smectic" states, which are mesomorphic conditions between liquid and crystal and which are assembled in superposed liquid layers or in columnar phases, or, more simply, the infinite variety of the state of crystals which become liquid or the opposite depending on a variable magnetic field, or, more clearly how the display on liquid crystal watches works. "Ferro-electric smectic elements", whose liquid layers are made up of sloping molecules, make it possible to have flat screens on which items are displayed in 64 micro-seconds.

In other words, within 10 years, the extra flat high-definition television set will have replaced the old cathode ray tube and, at the same time, a simple remote panel will control the opacity of windows, enabling people to do away with curtains.

Thus, although scientists might not understand everything in this complex area, industrialists are, nevertheless, forging ahead. For lack of "concepts", experimentation is enough for them — L'Actualité en France.



Complex molecular systems and industrialists take interest in the 'soft matters' (Bramab/Jerrican photo)

Arctic ice cap shrinking Serious implications for global climate

By Gert Lange

Shifts in the global climate have a considerable impact on the Earth's great ice caps, which, in turn, play a major role in determining climate. In addition to the high annual fluctuations in the formation and melting of the ice sheets, these factors render the task of identifying climate trends very complicated. However, meteorologists at Berlin's Free University, FU, have now proven that the ice cap in the Arctic Ocean is receding.

Since 1960 scientists at Berlin University's Meteorological Institute have been evaluating weather-satellite images and monitoring the ice mass in the European Arctic Ocean. They discovered that not only is the area of sea ice shrinking by approximately one per cent annually, but that this trend has been intensifying in recent years. A comparison of the most recent data with the average values calculated since 1966 shows, for example, that in May 1993 the area of ice cover was 6 per cent below the statistical average for the month of May.

The data on the ice cover is obtained from maps compiled with the aid of satellite images showing the visible light and infrared heat radiation. The area monitored is located between 50 degrees west and 40 degrees east, stretching from Godthaab in South Greenland to the Novaya Zemlya Peninsula in the east. Encompassing the whole of the European Arctic, this region is now considered to have a decisive impact on the circulation processes in the

North Atlantic and on Europe's climate. The extent of the ice cover in the European Arctic Ocean is at its greatest during the months of February and March, measuring a record 3 million km² in 1969. According to the meteorologist Matthias Eckhardt, who evaluated the data, extreme values recorded over the past 26 years show that although Greenland is sometimes totally ice-bound, the ice cap seldom reaches the northern coast of Iceland. In contrast, Spitzbergen is almost always cut off from the open sea in winter, enveloped by an ice belt stretching from Barents Sea up to the Kola Peninsula.

In Barents Sea, the ice cover is receding in a south-north direction and taking an east-west course in the Arctic sector of the Atlantic. Annually the average new-formation or melting of the ice-mass amounts to 1.4 million km². Plotting the lowest ice cover monitored for each degree of longitude onto a map produces a picture to please a sailor's heart — albeit one which never actually occurs in reality: only the most northerly tip of Greenland becomes ice-bound and Spitzbergen and even Franz Josef Land remain accessible — which despite being of welcome oases to shipping, marks an unparalleled and disturbing development.

At present the scientists are still unclear as to the causes of the decrease in the ice mass. American data indicates that the stretch of Arctic Ocean between Greenland and Alaska has become 5°C colder since 1950, and that the ice mass is

extending. Similarly, Scandinavian weather stations have also recorded a marked cooling-off in temperatures, contradicting predictions of a "greenhouse" effect. Despite these trends, air temperatures over the European Arctic have largely remained constant since monitoring began. Evaluation of previously inaccessible data from the Soviet Hydrological Service on drifting icebergs has shown a fall in temperature of 4.1°C in autumn and of 2.4°C in winter — results, which tend to refute any direct link between atmospheric circulation and the shrinking of the ice mass.

Professor Manfred Geb, from the study group Weather and Climate Trends at Berlin University have attributed this to the warming of the tropics, where annual mean near-surface temperatures have risen by 0.5°C since 1977. Consequently, a greater body of warm Atlantic water from the Gulf stream is being driven into the Norwegian Sea, where it mixes with the cold Arctic water. On average, the temperature throughout the Arctic Ocean has risen by 1°C in the last decade, suggesting that water temperature, salt content and changes in the hydrologic circulation have a greater impact on ice-formation than climatic fluctuations. Although the effects on the ocean circulation cannot yet be calculated, the reduction in ice cover may lead to the oceans absorbing more heat, and reinforce the threat of global warming — German Research Service.

Israel seeks to allay Syrian fears

(Continued from page 1)

vote on the land of others," Mr. Sharaa said.

"The concept of concession means that the one who owns something could give it up," another official said. "But what does Israel own to give it back? The Golan is Syrian territory and nothing could change this fact."

Anyway, the real intentions of Rabin would be tested at the bilateral talks which resume soon in Washington," he said.

President Ezer Weizman said he supported Mr. Rabin's call.

The question is: Land or peace? It makes sense that the people should decide and the best way for doing that is through a referendum," Mr. Weizman told Israel Radio.

Some Israeli newspaper commentators Wednesday described Mr. Rabin's decision to announce plans for a referendum as a clever manoeuvre that will buy time.

A government official said that by promising a vote, Mr. Rabin gave himself freedom to manoeuvre in his negotiations with Mr. Assad because he

lifted the tremendous pressures of the hawkish opposition.

Many ministers were not supportive of the manoeuvre, in part because they heard about it on the radio because it was never discussed in the cabinet.

"Why do I have to decide today? I don't understand the panic," Ora Namir, minister of social affairs and labour, told a group of American reporters. She said the government could decide the best course once the negotiations had reached a point where a decision was needed.

But a government official also said that by announcing a referendum, Mr. Rabin sent a message to Mr. Assad that the lower the territorial price demanded from Israel, the better the chance of getting public approval, the officials said.

The implicit message was that Mr. Rabin could not hand back the entire Golan without going to the public, the official said.

The Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, in an unattributed front-page report from Washington, said the U.S. administration reacted with "shock and anger" to the re-

ferendum decision and felt Mr. Rabin was playing for time in the negotiations with Syria.

The U.S. ambassador to Israel, Edward Djerejian, denied the report Wednesday. "I don't think there is any anger," Mr. Djerejian said on Israel Radio, noting that the decision was an internal matter.

A parliament debate on the Golan ended in disarray Wednesday when an apparent technical glitch distorted the vote count on non-binding resolutions by the government and the opposition.

Meanwhile, Yedioth columnist Nahum Barnea wrote Wednesday that Mr. Rabin's instructions to Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur to announce the referendum in parliament were made on the spur of the moment Monday.

Mr. Gur had come to Mr. Rabin's office to ask for pointers. Mr. Rabin and Mr. Gur, standing in the hallway, talked for about two minutes, Mr. Barnea said.

"A third participant said 'why not have him talk about a referendum,'" Mr. Barnea wrote. Mr. Rabin responded, "all right, say referendum," according to Mr. Barnea.

Regent meets U.S. lawmakers

(Continued from page 1)

Al Masri met the U.S. delegation along with a number of deputies. He reiterated Jordan's stand vis-a-vis the peace process, and Mr. Masri also called on the U.S. congressmen to help bring about an end to the naval blockade imposed on Aqaba and reduce the economic difficulties facing the country, as a result of the Gulf crisis.

Among the U.S. congressmen were Dan Glickman (Democrat — Kansas), James Bilbray (Democrat — Nevada) and Tom Lantos (Democrat — California).

U.S. embassy officials said that the delegation visited Jordan in the course of a tour of the Middle East region, including the occupied Palestinian lands.

Shortly before leaving for Damascus Mr. Lantos said in a statement to Petra that the United States would do its best to help Jordan overcome the present economic difficulties that resulted from the economic embargo on Iraq.

Mr. Lantos said that he believed the United States and Jordan would further bolster relations and that Washington would help Jordan's economy by encouraging tourists to come to the Kingdom and in American investors to start economic projects here.

Mr. Lantos suggested the creation of a free trade zone in the Middle East grouping Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Israel to help promote progress and prosperity.

Safeway relaunches with full safety procedures

AT a recent press conference, Safeway's General Manager Azzam Masri said it was possible for Safeway to reopen to the public within seven days after fire broke out in the shopping mall on Dec. 10, however, the management chose to seize the opportunity to totally upgrade safety measures and increase total reliance on in-house evacuation and safety procedures. Mr. Masri asserted that all old food items were destroyed at location under the supervision of the Health Department, while non-food items were taken by



the insurance company. All items carried now by Safeway were new purchases, he said.

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China
TOWN
RESTAURANT

Draft law presented on women

(Continued from page 1)

he said were essential for ministry officials to carry out their duties.

Islamic Action Front Deputy Abdul Rahim Al Akour demanded that the ministry finance the purchase of the cars from other sources and spend the JD 500,000 according to the law and on maintaining "broken windows and (heating systems) at schools."

After the House was informed of the resignation of Deputy Abdul Karim Al Dughmri from the Judiciary

Committee and the resignation of four deputies from committees set up to investigate contestations of the results of the Nov. 8 elections, House Speaker Taher Al Masri said he will investigate the causes of the resignations.

Mr. Dughmri is the fourth lawmaker to resign from the Judiciary Committee. While all of them said they resigned for "private reasons," other sources said the deputies were not happy with what they called the "dictatorial style" of its chairman, independent Islamist Deputy Abdul Baqi Jammo.

Military

(Continued from page 1)

army, navy and air force, as well as representatives of the Central Command.

General Joseph Hoar, head of the Central Command, was in Amman last week in what was described as a routine visit.

Gen. Hoar, who succeeded Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf after the war in Kuwait, has visited Jordan at least twice before during joint American-Jordanian military exercises.

High-level talks may be needed

(Continued from page 1)

and Palestinian demands for independent control at the border. He said there had been no progress on the issue this week.

Gen. Shabah said the two sides were searching for a formula that would both answer Israeli concerns about security and Palestinian demands for independent control at the border. He said there had been no progress on the issue this week.

The Palestinians want to make sure there were no Israelis visible at crossing points to Egypt and Jordan, arguing that autonomy is meaningless without sovereignty and flags at the border. Israel seeks the ability to check any flow of refugees or arms.

Gen. Shabah said borders was not the only issue dividing the two sides, noting among other issues that negotiations on water were continuing this week.

Another Israeli official said the two sides were nearing agreement on a position paper on the crossings. The paper would outline agreements and differences on both sides and could serve as a working document for the meeting between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres, said the official.

The proposed position paper

came as a result of two days of clause-by-clause negotiations, a process that has been described by both sides as an "advanced stage" of the negotiations.

"When you are ready to look paragraph by paragraph, you are ready to draft," a final working paper, Dr. Shaath told reporters in an impromptu press conference Tuesday night.

"Last week we were almost fighting each other," Dr. Shaath said. "We were on the verge of rejecting a whole paper just looking at a phrase."

Israeli delegation spokesman Ami Gluska agreed that the atmosphere was better, saying, "the atmosphere of this round is not one of crisis and debate."

Dr. Shaath cited the two kilometres road from the Jordan River to the checkpoint as an example of an unresolved control issue.

"We want coordination and cooperation on the whole passage... in order to succeed in making the passage a welcoming point for a peaceful new era," Dr. Shaath said.

He also said the Israelis were still resisting the display of Palestinian flags at the crossings. "These are symbols of national identity, not the makings of an independent state," he said.

Mr. Arafat Wednesday ex-

pressed satisfaction over the outcome of the Geneva summit between U.S. President Bill Clinton and his Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad.

Mr. Arafat told the Arabic-language Al Hayat newspaper that the outcome of Sunday's summit in Geneva "complements what has been achieved on the Jordanian and Palestinian tracks."

The peace process "will receive a new impetus" after Mr. Clinton's remarks at the summit, Mr. Arafat said. The U.S. and Syrian presidents called for a "peace of the brave" in 1994.

Mr. Arafat told the newspaper that his organisation shared Syria's call for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Arafat accused Israel of "manoeuvring" and called on the co-sponsors of the autonomy agreement, Washington and Moscow, to intervene.

"Israel is manoeuvring to try to escape from implementing its engagements and to secure the maximum for its own political interest," Mr. Arafat said, adding that the PLO had expected this to happen. "It is not a surprise for us."

Mr. Arafat also told the London-based daily, which publishes simultaneously in Beirut and several other Arab capitals, that "negotiations with Israel are not smooth."

British Embassy Annual Notice To All British Nationals Living In Jordan

Have you registered with the British Embassy. If you are a British citizen and live in Jordan, please contact the British Embassy; Consular Section, in order to obtain a registration form.

If you have registered during 1992, please confirm your continuing presence in Jordan by re-registering as soon as possible. Please also notify the Consular Section about any changes of address and/or telephone number. Such confirmation is in the interests of all British nationals in Jordan.

If names are not re-registered within three months the Embassy will be obliged to consider that those concerned have left the country. The names will accordingly be deleted from the register.

If you are a citizen of a Commonwealth country which does not have an Embassy or Consulate in Jordan, please ask the British Embassy, Consular Section, about registration formalities.

The British Embassy is located in Abdoun, near the Orthodox Club, Telephone 823100. The Post Office Box Number is B7.

The Consular Section is open from Sunday until Thursday 08:30-12:00 hours.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

A major contracting company has the following vacancies in the United Arab Emirates:

- Civil Engineers Should have at least 8 years exp. in construction work.
- Civil Engineers Should have at least 4 years exp. in construction work.
- Materials Eng. Should have exp. in procurement-Auto Cad.
- Production Eng. Should have exp. in steel and design.
- Electrical Eng. Should have at least 5-7 years exp. in domestics.
- Mechanical Eng. Should have at least 5-7 years exp. in plumbing, A/C, drainage, etc.

Visas are provided by the employing company. Please send your CV to: P.O. Box 926871, Amman-Jordan.

All applications will be treated with discretion.

Yeltsin hesitates over government; rouble plunges

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin said Wednesday that he would not form a new government until the rouble stabilizes and the economy improves.

Yeltsin's announcement came as the rouble fell to a new low of 1,607 to the dollar. The currency has fallen 29 percent so far this year.

Mr. Yeltsin's chief economic adviser Andrei Il'f said in London Tuesday that the falling influence of reformers would lead to an inflation explosion and the collapse of the rouble.

He predicted 100 per cent monthly inflation by the end of the year and a rouble-dollar rate of 2,000 in the next two weeks and 10,000 by mid-summer.

Mr. Yeltsin's announcement that talks could drag on for several more days added to the uncertainty that has been increasing since the success of Communist and ultra-nationalist blocs in December's elections to a new parliament.

Less than a week ago, Mr. Yeltsin told visiting U.S. President Bill Clinton he would not swerve from the reforms launched by Mr. Gaidar in January 1992.

But his legacy is under fire from conservatives who argue continued financial restraint will wreck industry, cause mass unemployment and, ultimately, social unrest.

Industrial chiefs and workers are also complaining about unpaid bills, unpaid wages and a shortage of supplies.

Mr. Yeltsin cannot overlook this message, underlined by the elections results. But he is caught in a political vice.

The West is pressing hard for action to cut the budget deficit and harness inflation.

Mr. Chernomyrdin, whose influence has grown markedly over the last few weeks of wrangling, stood by his conservative First Deputy Premier Alexander Zavarukha and Central Bank chief Viktor Gerashenko, whose dismissal Mr. Yeltsin had demanded.

Privatization Minister Anatoly Chubais, who, like Mr. Yeltsin, and Mr. Gaidar, campaigned for December's parliamentary elections for the main pro-Yeltsin bloc, Russia's Choice, said he would accept

Mr. Chernomyrdin's offer to stay on.

"It is hard for me to speak about the whole government or forecast its destiny, but I can speak for myself," Mr. Chubais told Russian Radio.

"I am obliged to complete the job for which I stood for election. Privatization will be brought to its conclusion."

Major Russian newspapers were unanimous in saying that Russia's government was moving towards a more conservative course, but the consequences remained unclear.

"On Monday, Yeltsin accepted Gaidar's resignation. It remains only to finish off his allies and we, the Democrats, will not be able to support the president in the Duma (parliament)," a commentary in the Literaturnaya Gazeta weekly said.

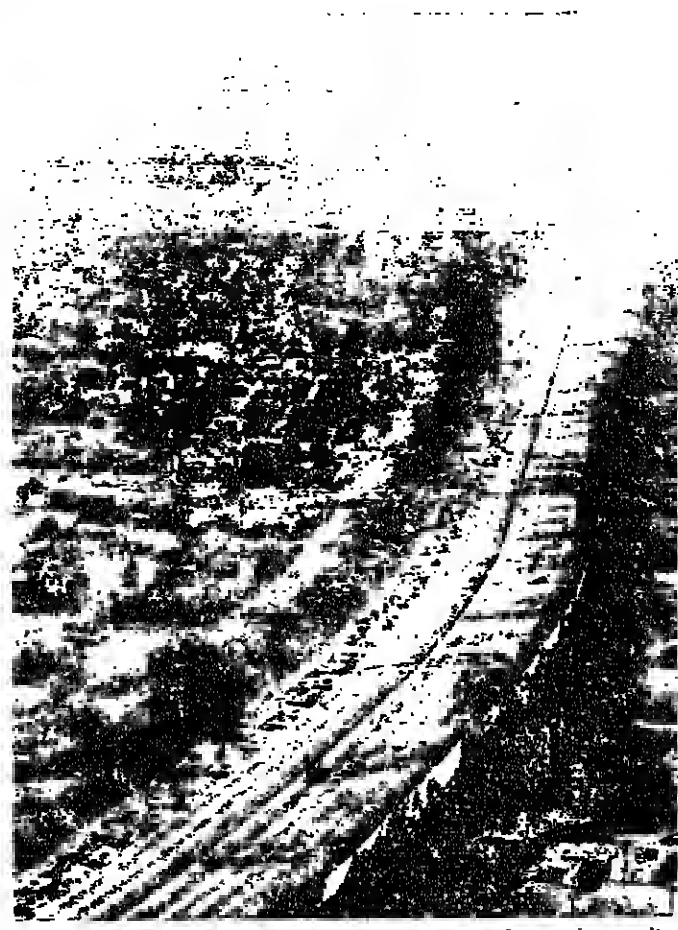
"It will not be clear who he will still be able to rely on," it added.

Mr. Yeltsin said Wednesday he was ready to stay in the Russian government, provided there were no radical changes to the reform process, Interfax News Agency said.

"I have not resigned and am not going to resign as long as government policy does not change to signal the end of reforms," Mr. Yeltsin told the agency.

But Mr. Yeltsin, who was finance minister and deputy prime minister in the old Russian government, made it clear that he wanted to retain both posts in a future administration.

On Wednesday he seemed to have dropped this demand and indicated only that his main condition was retaining the post of deputy premier.



Cars heading west are bumper to bumper as they wait to exit before the break in the road caused by the earthquake that rocked the Los Angeles area. The freeway in almost empty heading eastward into the city as commuters look for an alternate route (AFP photo)

Los Angeles quake ranks costliest in U.S. history

LOS ANGELES (R) — The death toll climbed to 42 Tuesday in the aftermath of a powerful earthquake that left 20,000 Los Angeles area residents homeless, wrecked the region's network of crisscrossing and caused billions of dollars in damage.

With the nation's second largest city still in shock following Monday's magnitude-6.6 quake, strong aftershocks continued rattling nerves and hampering efforts to clear the rubble.

A day after Los Angeles' most violent quake in two decades, insurance experts came up with a staggering estimate of losses — more than \$7 billion.

That was the damage caused by the 1989 San Francisco earthquake — until now the costliest in U.S. history — and officials of one major research firm said the losses in Los Angeles were actually much higher.

More than 2,800 people were injured, 550 of them seriously enough to be admitted for treatment at local hospitals. Red Cross officials issued urgent appeals for blood donors.

Rescue workers pulled the last body from the ruins of an apartment building in the suburb of Northridge — the 16th victim killed when the structure collapsed, crushing people on the ground floor as they slept.

The death toll, which stood at 30 Monday night, climbed throughout the day as the

coroner's office unearched eight fatalities linked to the quake, including three more heart attack victims.

More than 1,000 structures were damaged or destroyed, and an estimated 20,000 people were displaced. Thousands more were afraid to sleep in their own beds for fear their ceilings would crash down upon them.

President Bill Clinton planned to visit Los Angeles Wednesday for a first-hand look at the devastation, an official said.

In a city where the car has long been king, Monday's quake — centred in the San Fernando Valley northwest of downtown Los Angeles — left a vital lifeline of freeways in shambles.

Scenes of buckled concrete highways and snapped girders brought calls for an investigation of construction codes that were designed to prevent such destruction.

Large stretches of 11 major arteries leading to downtown Los Angeles were closed to traffic. At the point where motorists were forced off the damaged Santa Monica Freeway, the busiest highway in America, it took drivers an hour to go four blocks.

Even as aftershocks made the work treacherous, workers armed with explosives and earth-moving equipment quickly set about the task of clearing away the rubble. Repairs were expected to take up to 18 months.

Russia moves to allay concerns over troop remarks

MOSCOW (Agency) — Russia moved to dispel fears about a possible hardening of its attitude towards the Baltic states Wednesday, saying key comments by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev had been distorted by ITAR-TASS news agency.

Foreign Ministry spokesman George Karasin told Interfax News Agency there was no question of Russia changing its attitude towards the Baltics. TASS quoted Mr. Kozyrev as saying Tuesday he opposed a complete withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltics.

"There can be no talk about any change in Russia's attitude to building relations with the Baltic states," Mr. Karasin told Interfax.

TASS quoted Mr. Kozyrev as saying: "We should not withdraw from those regions which have been the sphere of Russian interests for centuries and we should not fear these words (military presence)."

Mr. Karasin said the TASS report had been "distorted."

Estonia and Latvia, negotiating with Moscow over a total pull-out of Russian forces which they see as a threat to their newly won sovereignty, have reacted angrily to Mr. Kozyrev's reported comments.

Baltic leaders were due to meet Wednesday amid alarm in their nations and the United States over reported remarks by the Russian foreign minister.

Washington said it was seeking clarification from Moscow to see if news reports accurately reflected Mr. Kozyrev's remarks.

Both Lithuania and Latvia charged late Tuesday that Mr. Kozyrev's statement marked a clear shift in Moscow's policy

towards the Baltics, despite a pledge at the U.S.-Russian summit last week that the last Russian troops would be removed from the region as soon as possible.

Latvian Prime Minister Valdis Birkums, quoted by the Baltic News Service, said Mr. Kozyrev's statement also appeared to "signify changes in Russia's relations with the United States."

He said Riga would ask Washington if this new Russian position had been coordinated with the United States.

The government of Estonia, the third Baltic partner, gave no immediate official reaction but its ambassador in Moscow said Mr. Kozyrev's remarks would be the focus of Wednesday's meeting of Baltic prime ministers in Jurmala, Latvia.

He said a joint declaration would probably be issued when talks ended.

Mr. Kozyrev's statements were viewed as surprising since he is a key reformer, though President Boris Yeltsin's government has come under increasing pressure from ultra-nationalists.

U.S. State Department spokesman Michael McCurry in Washington late Tuesday said "We certainly will ask to see a full transcript of his remarks to see if somehow or other the news accounts might not be accurately reflecting the sentiments."

"But, if they are accurate, we certainly will seek clarification from the Russian government," he added.

"We have told the Russian government repeatedly that we expect prompt withdrawal of all Russian troops from Estonia and Latvia," Mr. McCurry said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

11 die in Russian plane crashes

MOSCOW (AFP) — A military transport plane crashed Wednesday near Tver, 150 kilometres north of Moscow, killing up to 11 people, the ITAR-TASS News Agency said. It said that up to 11 people may have been killed when the plane, a heavy cargo Antonov-22, crashed. The plane had taken off at 11:30 a.m. (0930 GMT) from a military airport near Tver. Its pilot had radioed that there was an explosion on board at about 11:40 a.m. A helicopter was at the crash site trying to retrieve the black box that reports on the flight. It was not clear how many people were aboard the plane. The crash was the latest in a series of accidents involving Soviet-era planes, the last of which occurred in early January when a Tupolev 154 airliner crashed near the Siberian city of Irkutsk killing 125 people. In late December, 36 people died when a transport plane crashed during landing in Armenia and in November a Antonov-124 cargo plane crashed in southeastern Iran killing 17 passengers and crew members on board.

15 killed in Sri Lankan bus bombing

COLOMBO (R) — At least 15 passengers were killed and up to 40 injured when a bomb exploded in a north-central Sri Lanka, police said. The bus was carrying mostly Sinhalese, the island's majority community, and was heading to a police checkpoint when the bomb went off near an army camp at Rambewa in Anuradhapura district, about 200 kilometres from Colombo. A brief military statement, however, said only seven were killed and 42 injured in the attack. A military spokesman earlier said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were suspected of involvement in the bombing. A local councillor, who was a bus passenger, said the bomb may have been planted under a seat in the rear of the vehicle.

Deep freeze kills 57 in U.S.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The blast of Arctic cold sweeping through the central and eastern United States since Sunday has been blamed for 57 deaths and has caused schools, businesses and even a brewery in Wisconsin to shut down. With the thermometer dipping to the double digits below zero Celsius and bone-chilling windchill factors approaching minus 55 degrees Celsius (minus 70 degrees Fahrenheit) Americans from Minnesota to Maine are being warned to stay indoors. On top of the frigid air, snow, sleet and in some areas ice have made roadways treacherous. Most of the 57 victims of the cold snap were killed on icy roads or by heart attacks while shoveling snow. A newborn froze to death Monday in an unheated house in Dayton, Ohio, where the temperature fell to a record 32 degrees below zero Celsius (25 degrees below Fahrenheit).

Gunmen wound Crimean Tatar leader

KIEV (R) — Gunmen opened fire on a prominent member of the Crimean Tatar minority, seriously wounding him and killing two bodyguards two days after presidential elections in the region, Tatar officials said Wednesday. Eskander Nemetov, the sole Tatar member of Crimea's local parliament, was getting out of his car in the city of Simferopol Tuesday night when the attackers struck. He is among 11 people in serious condition in hospital. Russian nationalist Yuri Meshkov finished first in Sunday's first round of the presidential election in Crimea, an "autonomous republic" in Ukraine. But he has since backed away from campaign promises to reunite the peninsula with Russia. He got more than twice as many votes as Nikolai Bagrov, the sole candidate who favoured a stronger Crimean under Ukrainian control and is well placed to win a run-off on Jan. 30.

Gandhi assassination trial begins

MADRAS, India (AFP) — The trial of the alleged assassins of Rajiv Gandhi began Wednesday, more than two-and-a-half years after the former prime minister was killed by a woman suicide bomber during an election campaign. The trial opened at a high-security prison-cum-court in the town of Poonamallee, some 20 kilometres from Madras, the capital of the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Twenty-six people — 16 Sri Lankan Tamils and 10 Indians — have been charged with involvement in the May 21, 1991 murder of the son of Indira Gandhi, who was herself cut down by a Sikh bodyguard's bullets in May 1984. The Indian authorities have said Rajiv Gandhi's assassination was carried out by Sri Lanka's main Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), to avenge India's June 1987 intervention in the island's Tamil conflict.

China increases missile production

BEIJING (AFP) — China's missile production grew by 53.9 per cent last year, compared to 1992, Xinhua reported Wednesday. Zhu Yuli, president of China's Aviation Industry, did not give any production figures, the news agency said. "This spectacular increase shows a great weapons-production effort by China, and a marked increase in military exports," a Western expert said. China was accused by the United States of delivering missiles to countries such as Pakistan, Iran and Syria.

U.S. official removed from U.N. post

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The highest-ranking U.S. official at the United Nations has been removed from her job after disagreements with Secretary General Boutros Ghali, officials said. Dr. Ghali refused to renew the one-year contract of Melissa Wells, who held the title of undersecretary general for administration and management and was heading an effort to root out fraud and mismanagement at the international organisation. "It is unfortunate that the secretary general lost confidence in her," said Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the U.N. in Washington State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said. "The 62-year-old Wells clashed with the secretary general over several issues, and in her letter of resignation obtained by the Washington Post, she accused him of keeping too many decisions to himself. She added that he was 'not fully benefiting' from the resources of the U.N. staff because it had been 'too difficult and all too rare' for them to find out what he wanted to accomplish."

Quake shakes Indonesian province

JAKARTA (R) — A strong earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter Scale shook Indonesia's remote Irian Jaya province Wednesday but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, a meteorological official said. The official, Budi Nugroho, told Reuters by telephone from the provincial capital Jayapura that the focus of the quake was believed to be deep beneath the seabed about 500 kilometres west of the city. "It was strong but deep, about 33 kilometres below the surface. I don't expect any damage or casualties because it is deep," he said. The U.S. Geological Survey in Golden, Colorado, reported the quake measured 6.9 on the Richter Scale.

Ghali arrives in Netherlands

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali arrived here from Geneva late Tuesday for a three-day official visit to the Netherlands, a spokesman for Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport said. Dr. Ghali was met off the plane by Dutch Premier Ruud Lubbers. Aside from meeting with Mr. Lubbers, his tour will also take in the International Court of Justice at the Hague, the highest court in the United Nations, and the International Court for Crimes in the former Yugoslavia.

Foreign children on the increase in Japan

TOKYO (R) — Nearly twice as many children of foreign birth are studying Japanese as a second language, compared to two years ago, news reports said Sunday. An Education Ministry report showed 10,450 children at 3,705 primary and junior high schools nationwide taking Japanese language lessons. In a 1991 survey, the combined total was 5,403. The children represent 48 foreign language groups, including Swahili and Bengali. More than half speak Portuguese or Spanish as their first language, a result of a sharp increase in the number of immigrant workers of Japanese descent from South America. A government report shows the number of foreigners entering Japan to work more than doubled, to 113,599, between 1986 and 1991. To help cope, Japanese schools are using exchange students or special education classes.

5 expelled from drugs at top British school

LONDON (R) — Five teenage girls have been expelled from Britain's most exclusive convent school after a police drug swoop, the Mail On Sunday newspaper reported. Drug squad detectives raided the £3,665 (\$5,470) a term St Mary's School at Ascot southwest of London, after a tip from the headmistress and found cannabis in the bedrooms of the five pupils the newspaper said. The school has only 338 pupils — all daughters of British and European aristocracy and wealthy families — and includes Princess Caroline of Monaco among its past students. The Mail On Sunday quoted the school bursar Phillip Callan as saying: "It is firm school policy, published to all pupils, parents and staff, that anyone found to be involved with drugs will face immediate expulsion... It is very disappointing for the school."

Husbands wash up, but ironing too hot to handle

LONDON (R) — The nineties British husband is happy to do the vacuum-cleaning and more than willing to get his hands wet washing up, according to a survey published Monday. But the cooker remains a mystery to most married men and the iron is certainly too hot to handle, said the survey. Researchers who questioned 2,000 married couples found more than 70 per cent of men never cooked and only two per cent did the ironing often. Two-thirds helped with cleaning and more than half regularly washed dishes. "It probably means that we shall be using more male models in our catalogue," said Nigel Swaby, chief executive of the household products company that organised the survey.

Woman trapped in elevator for three days

VIAREGGIO, Italy (AP) — There were few ups or downs for Mila Bertelli, who kept her level cool while trapped in an elevator for three days with nothing but her cigarettes and newspapers. She was so calm she didn't even smoke. "When the alarm quit ringing after 24 hours, I thought there was nothing else to do," the 47-year-old woman told Il Messaggero, a Rome daily. "I started to shout, to bang on the door, to call for help. Nothing. Time never seemed to pass. Bertelli, from Florence, had the misfortune to spend the middle of the week at a building used primarily as a weekend retreat in Viareggio, a seaside resort. For 38 hours, from Wednesday to Friday, no one heard the alarm or her cries for help, according to the newspaper account published Sunday. The torture started when she stepped into the elevator after having eaten breakfast at an outdoor cafe and picking up the newspaper. The elevator rose two floors and then got stuck before reaching the third floor. Ms. Bertelli said she slept a little, kept track of the time by noting daylight coming through an opening and decided not to risk filling the elevator with cigarette smoke. Finally, on Friday, her husband arrived and called the fire department. To keep her mind off her problem, Ms. Bertelli said, she read the papers and thought about the Caribbean."

Envoy espouses 'political solution' to Mexico conflict

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (AP) — A government envoy believes social and political reforms are the answer to rebellion in southern Mexico but suggests he will talk with rebels only about the conditions for disarming.

Manuel Camacho Solis presented the government's formal response Tuesday to rebel demands for talks, declaring that the country had heard their grievances and wanted a peaceful settlement.

"Citizens and political forces throughout the country clamour for a political and humanitarian solution," Mr. Camacho Solis said at a news conference in which he made public an exchange of messages with the rebels.

The rebels seized San Cristobal and outlying towns on Jan. 1, saying they were fighting for the rights of Indians, who are a majority in the impoverished southern state of Chiapas but often lack jobs and housing.

Tuesday's formal response to the rebels for talks came on the same day Chiapas Gov. Elmar Setzer Marseille resigned, saying he wanted "to contribute to peace in the state."

Mr. Setzer, who was in office a year, had been accused of being a weak leader with close ties to the powerful landowners who are among the targets of the revolt. His successor was elected by the state legislature and quickly vowed Tuesday to seek the road of reconciliation.

Mr. Camacho Solis said he supported political, social and legal reforms for Chiapas but that any changes must be made in a peaceful climate "without the pressure of armed struggle."

He said the guerrillas must assure the "suspension of all initiatives of fire" as a condition for talks and that a dialogue would establish the "specific guarantees" of an amnesty offered last week.

But in no part did he suggest wider negotiations with the rebels on political or social reforms.

Rather he said once "the conditions of pacification" had been achieved, changes could be considered through the "legal political process."

The government said 107 people have been killed since the uprising and counteroffensive by 14,000 troops that forced the rebels to retreat into mountains and jungles. Church officials said the death toll was far higher.

The government subsequently ordered a unilateral ceasefire on Jan. 12, and the rebels said later they were abiding by that ceasefire to "open channels" for dialogue.

On Sunday, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari offered an amnesty.

Mr. Setzer, who was in office a year, had been accused of being a weak leader with close ties to the powerful landowners who are among the targets of the revolt. His successor was elected by the state legislature and quickly vowed Tuesday to seek the road of reconciliation.

Italy's Christian Democrats split before poll

ROME (R) — Italy's once-dominant Christian Democrats staged their own funeral ahead of national elections on March 27-28 that seem certain to break the scandal-hit party's decades-old grip on power.

But their relaunch Tuesday as the Popular Party, a new name to emphasise a break with a past discredited by corruption revelations, was clouded by a walkout by dissident members.

The split took place as the government resolved a row with the country's Jewish community by extending the polls to March 28, enabling Jews to vote without violating religious laws governing their Passover festival on March 27.

The breakaway group, calling itself the Christian Democratic Centre, said it would seek allies on the centre-right in a pact to challenge the ex-Communist left in the elections.

"We have reached this point with profound bitterness and in the knowledge that we no longer had a democratic home in which to express our views," said Omberto Fumagalli, a Christian Democrat deputy in the outgoing parliament.

The Christian Democrats, who had held power in coalitions ever since World War II, were humiliated in local elections last year as voters reacted to news of their involvement in entrenched bribery and corruption among Italy's political elite.

Several prominent party figures, including Giulio Andreotti, seven times prime minister and a symbol of post-war Italy, are also under investigation over alleged mafia links.

Mino Martinazzoli, appointed Christian Democrat leader in October 1992, said he was hater about the defections but he made clear that the divorce was final.

Mr. Martinazzoli opened the doors to a popular party alliance with leading reformer Mario Segni, whose embryonic pact for Italy is casting around for partners in a bid to capture the centre ground of Italy's fractious politics.

"A pact would recognise his leadership of government... but it must be based on a relationship of equality," he said.

Mr. Segni spearheaded the campaign for the abolition of Italy's discredited proportional representation system. It has been replaced by a new, mainly majority voting formula that will make alliances crucial to success in the elections.

Inman cites conspiracy for withdrawal move

WASHINGTON (R) — Retired Admiral Bobby Ray Inman said Tuesday he was withdrawing as President Bill Clinton's nominee for defence secretary, citing a conspiracy against him and a "modern McCarthyism" in U.S. media and politics.

In an extraordinary hour-long news conference, Adm. Inman lashed out at what he called "vitriolic" attacks on him by New York Times columnist William Safire among others and said he had decided he was not prepared to "put up with that garbage just to do public service."

White House officials released Adm. Inman's letter of withdrawal and Mr. Clinton's brief acceptance letter but declined comment. The president ignored reporters' questions when he returned to the White House from a routine physical exam.

The announcement was a setback for the president, who has failed to establish a settled national security team and last month eased out Defence Secretary Les Aspin following policy confusion over conflicts in Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti.

In his news conference in

Brown's 23 points help beat Rockets

NBA

HOUSTON (R) — Dee Brown scored 23 points and had seven assists as the Boston Celtics defeated the Houston Rockets 95-83 Tuesday.

Robert Parish, the oldest player in the league at 40, did well in battle of centres with Hakeem Olajuwon, collecting 19 points and a season-high 17 rebounds — compared to 28 points and 12 boards for the Rockets' centre.

Sherman Douglas added 17 points and six assists to help Boston win its second straight game.

In Seattle, Kendall Gill led five Seattle players in double figures with 19 points as the Sonics downed the Los Angeles Lakers, 103-88.

Shawn Kemp added 18 points, and Nick Van Exel had 22 points for Los Angeles, which suffered its fourth straight loss.

Gary Payton scored 16 points and dished out nine assists and keyed the stretch run to help the Sonics improve to 17-1 at home.

In Phoenix, Dan Majerle scored 24 of his 27 points in the first three quarters when the Phoenix Suns built a 17-point lead on the way to a 113-103 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

The loss was the 10th in a row for the Mavericks, who fell to 2-33.

Phoenix played without injured stars Charles Barkley and Kevin Johnson, but were carried to victory by Majerle, A.C. Green and Oliver Miller.

In Milwaukee, Jon Barry

scored a career-high 21 points and Eric Murdock added 18 as the Milwaukee Bucks rolled to a 123-91 rout of Detroit and handed the Pistons their 14th consecutive loss.

The 14 straight losses ties a franchise single-season record set over the final 14 games of the 1979-80 season.

The victory snapped Milwaukee's six-game losing streak.

Rookie Allan Houston led Detroit with a season-high 19 points.

In Miami, Ron Harper sank four free throws down the stretch as the Los Angeles Clippers rallied from a 19-point second-half deficit to defeat the slumping Miami Heat, 126-124, in a game featuring 23 made three-point field goals.

The Clippers, who trailed 98-79, with 1:27 left in the third quarter, outscored Miami, 41-26, in the fourth quarter denying head coach Kevin Loughery his 600th career victory.

Miami has lost five games in a row.

In Denver, Rod Strickland's two free throws with 29 seconds left lifted the Portland Trail Blazers to a 104-103 overtime victory over the Denver Nuggets.

The two teams combined for just 3-of-17 shooting from the field in overtime.

Portland won its fourth straight game despite hitting only one of eight field goals and scoring just six points in the extra session.

Denver missed seven of nine field goal attempts in overtime.



Williams-Renault F-1 manager Frank Williams (left) and British Damon Hill (right) are flanked by his new team driver Brazilian Ayrton Senna (center) (AFP photo)

Senna joins up with Williams

ESTORIL, Portugal (R) — Brazilian Ayrton Senna has made his first official appearance as a Williams driver — in the safety of a hotel lounge rather than speeding around a racetrack.

Senna appeared late Tuesday at a reception laid on by the team to launch their 1994 challenge.

The three-time world champion, who has replaced retired French world champion Alain Prost, appeared very relaxed when he stood alongside his new teammate Briton Damon Hill.

Senna said: "It's all going to be a bit of a guessing game this year but I suppose I have to say that if I can be as happy at the

end of the season as I have felt in the past few weeks it will have been a great year for me.

"There have been so many changes both with the regulations and for me with a new team that I know it will be a very tough championship.

"But I am looking forward to it very much and am hoping for a very competitive season.

"Damon knows how to win after his three Grand Prix victories last season and I think he will be even more competitive in 1994. I'm sure it will be tough for us both and I hope we will both enjoy the whole experience very much despite all the usual expectations of controversy. I am looking forward to it very much."

Senna's new team boss Frank Williams also appeared on stage during the reception held at the Palacio Hotel in Estoril and he admitted to "great satisfaction" in signing the Brazilian to his team, 11 years after he had first given him the chance to test one of his cars.

"It is true I have been an admirer of Ayrton for a long time," said Williams.

"This gives me very great personal satisfaction. But I am fearful he will think too highly of Williams — so I hope he will not be too disappointed.

"I think we have two very strong drivers in the strongest driver combination in F1 so if we don't win the championship it will not be their fault."

Sampras struggles against unknown Russian in open

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Pete Sampras was taken to the brink at the Australian open by a Russian teenager playing in only his second Grand Slam Tennis tournament.

Sampras, the U.S. Open and Wimbledon champion, took 3 hours, 20 minutes to beat 19-year-old Yevgeny Kafelnikov 6-3, 2-6, 6-3, 1-6, 9-7 Wednesday and advance to the third round.

Kafelnikov, a powerful, speedy right-hander who only turned professional in 1992, matched Sampras ground stroke for flashing ground stroke throughout a match that had the centre court crowd enthralled.

Kafelnikov, winner of the Australian Hardcourt Championship two weeks ago in Adelaide, was frequently able to out-duel Sampras in long baseline rallies, changing the angles and then ripping the ball past the top-ranked player in the world.

But Kafelnikov, ranked 61th in the world, finally ran out of patience.

He drove a forehand wide to give Sampras the decisive break at 8-7 — and dug his racket into the ground several times in frustration.

Sampras clinched the match, on his third match point, when Kafelnikov sent a backhand long.

Sampras had served for the match two games earlier, but was broken at love by the nervous youngster.

Earlier, defending champion Jim Courier rediscovered his rhythm and scored a 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 victory over South African Marcos Ondruska. Courier had struggled to beat Bryan Shelton over five sets Monday.

Ivan Lendl, champion in both 1989 and 1990 but seeded 15th after a 12-month slump, advanced with a slick 5-7, 6-2, 6-2, 6-2 victory over fellow American Richey Reneberg.

The Czech-born Lendl ended the match emphatically — with three straight aces. He had 25 aces in all and 68

outright winners.

Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden, seeded 10th, beat New Zealander Brett Steven 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, 4-6, 6-2, while no. 11 Marc Rosset of Switzerland, the Olympic champion, defeated compatriot Jakob Hlasek 6-4, 7-6 (7-4), 3-6, 6-2 in another second-round match.

In women's singles, 17-year-old American Chanda Rubin surprised 12th-seeded South African Amanda Coetzer 6-1, 2-6, 6-3 but several other seeds advanced.

No. 3 Conchita Martinez of Spain scrambled by experienced American Patty Fendick 6-7 (4-7), 6-1, 6-4 while no. 7 Anke Huber of Germany outlasted Julie Halard of France 7-6 (8-6), 3-6, 6-3.

Two-time finalist Mary Joe Fernandez, seeded sixth, struggled past Ines Gorrochategui of Argentina after being down 2-4 in the final set of an error-riddled contest. She won 6-3, 2-6, 9-7.

No. 10 Kimiko Date of

Japan beat American Meredith McGrath 6-4, 6-2. Helena Sukova of the Czech republic, seeded 13th, edged Mana Endo of Japan 6-4, 5-7, 7-5, and no. 10 Lindsay Davenport beat Germany's Wiltrud Probst 6-1, 7-5.

The intense Courier is aiming to become only the third man to win three straight men's singles titles at the Australian Open and was pleased with his improved form.

"Today I served much better and I got to hit a lot more balls," Courier said. "I got my game a bit."

"I felt pretty good out there and I should be back at 100 per cent for my next match."

Ondruska — one of Courier's regular practice partners — was not able to attack the third-seeded American as Shelton did, and won only 48 per cent of points on his first serve.

Lendl, 33, was content with his improved form and said rival players are giving him renewed respect.

Leconte collapses on court

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Frenchman Henri Leconte was in hospital under observation here Wednesday after collapsing and dramatically forfeiting his second round match at the Australian Open.

The popular 30-year-old lefthander suffered from heat exhaustion, according to the doctor who treated him for several minutes on court before he was wheeled away on a mobile stretcher.

Leconte was trailing his opponent, Martin Damm of the Czech republic, 1-6, 7-6 (7/1), 6-4, 4-2 when he came to grief. Damm advances to the third round where he will play Australian wild card Brent Larkham.

The doctor, John Fraser, who is also the president of the host Victorian Tennis Association, told a press conference that he had decided to send the 90th ranked Leconte to hospital.

"I decided to play it safe and send him off to hospital for observation and help replace the fluids he lost during the match," said Fraser.

"He fainted, but he was quite lucid when I got to him. I've seen worse cases of heat exhaustion, but Henri told me that he had had a similar episode while playing a tournament in Memphis in 1979."

Fraser, who is the brother of recently-retired Australian Davis Cup captain Neale Fraser, said that Leconte had suffered spasms, which was consistent with heat exhaustion.

"I took his pulse, blood pressure and checked his respiratory system and his skin texture which is normal procedure."

Harding to separate from ex-husband

PORTLAND, Ore (R) — Top U.S. figure skater Tonya Harding announced in a statement Tuesday night that she was separating from her ex-husband Jeff Gillooly, who has been accused of involvement in an attack on a rival skater.

Harding and Gillooly were divorced in August last year, but were reconciled in October and continue to live together.

In a statement sent by her attorney, to local media, Harding said: "After a lot of agonizing thought and evaluation, I have decided it would be best for Jeff and me to separate."

"The events of the last few days have been difficult for both of us," she added.

Harding and Gillooly have faced a barrage of allegations since Harding's husband, Shawn Eckardt, was arrested last week and charged with

conspiring to assault Harding's top rival, Nancy Kerrigan. Two other men have also been charged.

Kerrigan was injured when a man hit her on the leg with a baton after practice for the U.S. figure skating championships in Detroit Jan 6.

In the statement, Harding said she was innocent of involvement in the Kerrigan attack and continued to believe that Gillooly is innocent.

Harding said she wished Gillooly "nothing but the best."

"But I believe during this crucial time of preparation for the Olympics I must concentrate my attention on my training," Harding said.

Harding and Kerrigan were selected to represent the United States at the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, next month. But the uproar over the Kerrigan assault has disrupted her training and led the U.S. Olympic committee to discuss whether she should be excluded from the Olympics.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Record number expected at Olympics

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (R) — Winter Olympic organisers said they anticipated a record number of competing nations at the games next month despite setting tough qualifying targets.

"We expect that we'll end up with between 65 and 72 nations," said organising committee spokesman Rolf Nereng. The 1992 Winter Games in Albertville had a record 64 nations. But Nereng said the tough limits meant Lillehammer was likely to have fewer competitors overall than Albertville. "We expect we'll have roughly 2,000 competitors — that could even mean a few empty beds at the athlete's village," he said. There were almost 2,200 athletes at Albertville. "We're the first games with such strict limits and it's been impossible to calculate the numbers exactly in advance. Nagano in 1998 should be able to plan better," he said.

China supercoach threatens to quit

BEIJING (R) — China's mercurial supercoach Ma Junren has threatened to quit, alleging government failure to finance his "Ma family army" of world champion women runners, an official newspaper reported Wednesday. Ma also alleged that unnamed enemies conspired to

undermine his success and that others were damaging his team's reputation by using its name to market shoddy goods without permission.

China's first star coach has sparked controversy ever since his women began obliterating world records last year, under his unconventional training and dietary programmes. National debate erupted this month after Ma sacked 1,500 metre world champion Liu Dong for defying his demands to dump her boyfriend and cut her long hair.

Club asks thieves to return up

LONDON (R) — An obscure English football club with a glorious past appealed Wednesday for thieves to return soccer's first "world cup" won by the team early this century. The team of coal miners from West Auckland in northern England, chosen to represent England in a 1909 European competition after the official football league declined to take part, beat Italy's Juventus 2-0 in the final. The miners, first seen as hopeless outsiders, again beat the Italians 6-1 in 1911 to win back the Sir Thomas Lipton Trophy. West Auckland manager Stuart Alderson said the club was offering a \$1,000 (\$1,500) reward for the return of the three-foot-high (one-metre) trophy which was stolen from a supposedly burglar-proof cabinet in a local bar.

Marathon chess battle ends in Dutch victory

WIJK AAN ZEE, The Netherlands (R) — The longest game in the world chess championships candidates final ended Tuesday in an extraordinary victory for Dutch Paul Van Der Sterren after seven and a half hours and 79 moves.

The win leaves Van Der Sterren, 37, tied with the United States' sole representative Gata Kamsky, 19, at one win each in the eight game match.

The marathon struggle between Kamsky and Van Der Sterren was rated as the best game of the championships so far.

Kamsky, playing with the white pieces, sacrificed his

queen on the 20-second move of a Ruy Lopez opening, a strategem he had clearly prepared at home. The sacrifice led to mind-boggling complications which led to severe time trouble for Van Der Sterren.

Gradually the Dutchman gained the upper hand but after six hours' play the game was adjourned overnight.

However Van Der Sterren had other ideas. Analysing with his assistants deep into the night he found an obscure trap for his opponent and the inexperienced American, barely half his age, played too quickly Tuesday and fell into the snare.

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & YAMAM HUSSEIN
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STEP BY STEP

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ K 8 5
♥ J 10 8 4
♦ J 9 7 3
♣ K 5

EAST
♠ 2
♥ 8 3
♦ Q 8 4 2
♣ A J 8 7 4 2

SOUTH
♠ A Q 8 7 4 3
♥ A K 5
♦ A K 5
♣ 3

The bidding:
South: 1♣, 2♣, 3♣, 4♣, 5♣, 6♣, 7♣, 8♣, 9♣, 10♣, 11♣, 12♣, 13♣, 14♣, 15♣, 16♣, 17♣, 18♣, 19♣, 20♣, 21♣, 22♣, 23♣, 24♣, 25♣, 26♣, 27♣, 28♣, 29♣, 30♣, 31♣, 32♣, 33♣, 34♣, 35♣, 36♣, 37♣, 38♣, 39♣, 40♣, 41♣, 42♣, 43♣, 44♣, 45♣, 46♣, 47♣, 48♣, 49♣, 50♣, 51♣, 52♣, 53♣, 54♣, 55♣, 56♣, 57♣, 58♣, 59♣, 60♣, 61♣, 62♣, 63♣, 64♣, 65♣, 66♣, 67♣, 68♣, 69♣, 70♣, 71♣, 72♣, 73♣, 74♣, 75♣, 76♣, 77♣, 78♣, 79♣, 80♣, 81♣, 82♣, 83♣, 84♣, 85♣, 86♣, 87♣, 88♣, 89♣, 90♣, 91♣, 92♣, 93♣, 94♣, 95♣, 96♣, 97♣, 98♣, 99♣, 100♣.

Opening lead: Jack of ♠.

This is one of our favorite hands. South has few chances to take 12 tricks at a spade slam and, if they are tested in the right order, South can try them all.

Once North could make a positive response to the demand bid, it was simply a matter of whether declarer rested in a small slam or a grand. That question was answered quickly when South discovered an ace was missing.

West led the jack of spades and declarer correctly won with the queen in the closed hand. The five possibilities are:

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Ahmad Zaki in
The Lady's Chauffeur
(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

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NATO experts work on Bosnia strike plans

Serbs, Croats sign accord

BRUSSELS (Agencies) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ordered its military experts here Wednesday to work with the United Nations on final preparations for possible air strikes in Bosnia-Herzegovina, diplomats said.

But they added that any NATO military action, particularly bombing to break the Serb blockade of the mainly-Muslim towns of Srebrenica and Tuzla, still depended on a go-ahead from U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

NATO's political executive, the North Atlantic Council (NAC), met Wednesday to follow through a decision at last week's summit of the 16-nation alliance to prepare for bombing raids on Serb positions around Srebrenica and Tuzla.

Detailed plans for such raids were prepared by commanders of U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) last week and handed to Dr. Ghali in Geneva on Monday.

They are now being studied by the U.N.'s special representative in ex-Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, who must then submit his recommendations to the U.N. and subsequently to NATO.

In Geneva, the latest round of Bosnia peace talks looked set to end in failure, but Croatia and rump Yugoslavia signed an accord restoring limited diplomatic ties.

The accord was negotiated on the sidelines of Bosnian peace talks, which appeared to be going nowhere. Mediator Lord Owen said Bosnia's Serbs, Croats and Muslims were likely to return home and fight it out on the battlefield.

The second day of talks began with a meeting between the mediators and presidents Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman of Serbia and Croatia. Serbia is the dominant republic in rump Yugoslavia, which also includes Montenegro.

The Serb-Zagreb accord stopped short of mutual diplomatic recognition. The two

governments agreed to open offices in each other's capitals on Feb. 15.

Presidents Milosevic and Tudjman shook hands after their foreign ministers signed the agreement, pledging to work for "just and lasting solution of the crisis" in former Yugoslavia.

After Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia fought a six-month war that ended with a U.N.-mediated truce in January 1992.

The two countries are accused of supporting ethnic Serbs and ethnic Croats against the Muslim-led government in Bosnia's civil war. More than 200,000 people have died in the fighting.

With the fighting intensifying in Bosnia and the parties apparently preparing for new offensives after winter, the Geneva peace discussions included the possibility of international arbitration as a way out of the impasse.

The Muslim-led government in Sarajevo and the Croats agreed in principle to submit all territorial differences to a panel that could be created by the U.N. Security Council, a Bosnian spokesman said.

But he added that details of the scheme were still under discussion and Serbia's Milosevic, chief patron of the separatist Serbs who control 70 per cent of Bosnia was cool to the idea.

The spokesman, Mirza Hagic, said Mr. Tudjman made the proposal for arbitration at a meeting with his Bosnian counterpart Alija Izetbegovic last week in Bonn.

He said the arbitration panel must be given a deadline to render its decisions but he did not say what measures would be taken against any of the parties refusing to accept the judgements.

Few other new initiatives were circulating, and diplomats said a meeting of the Geneva conference's 32-member steering committee was scheduled for Feb. 2 to discuss the next steps in the peace process.

Regent calls for establishment of body for inter-faith dialogue

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday called for the establishment of a religious institute whose main task would be the promotion of inter-faith dialogue in the Middle East, since this region is the source of monotheistic religions.

In the concluding session of the 11th Islamic Christian dialogue which was organised by the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research in cooperation with the Vatican council on promoting relations with other faiths, Prince Hassan said such an institute would contribute to crystallising thoughts and ideas promoting the cause of peace in the region.

Conveying to the participants in the dialogue the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein, Prince Hassan stressed the need to expand the participation of youth in inter-faith dialogue and to make such meetings include the participation of all segments of society other than the elite only. He said that he believes university and college curricula should

include ideas and concepts affirming the importance of inter-faith dialogues.

Statements issued by the Vatican condemning the occupier and aggressor at any time and in any place had contributed to shedding light on the tragedies of many people, including the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Prince said.

The Crown Prince proposed making the Mediterranean sea linking the Arab World and Europe instead of being a sea splitting the two.

"Some people are ignorant about the essence of the Islamic message and accuse it of extremism at a time when 80 per cent of the world's refugees and displaced persons are Muslims," Prince Hassan said.

Cardinal Francis Arinze, president of the Vatican council on promoting relations with other faiths, also addressed the gathering held at the Royal Court, saying the two-day conference signified the depth of understanding between the followers of Islam and Christianity, who represent more than half of the world's population.

"We should all work for the

good of humanity to create a better world and make a brighter future for all peoples," Cardinal Arinze said. "Providence had brought us here and facilitated the holding of this dialogue at the present time in history to work together seriously to achieve this goal through the exploitation of all available means, including the media, which we have seen in the past, had the greatest influence in making it easier for us to achieve our goals."

The cardinal voiced hope that this meeting will be an incentive for the participants to be more prepared for the next meeting which will be held in 1995 in Rome under the motto: "Religion and the Environment."

The Vatican official voiced admiration of the special relationship between Muslims and Christians in Jordan and commended the Islamic-Christian joint culture which represents the accumulation of centuries-old relationships distinguished for justice and peace.

The cardinal presented Prince Hassan with the Arabic translation of old scrolls as a token gift.

Algeria releases desert detainees

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Authorities in violence-wracked Algeria have freed a number of suspected extremist sympathisers held in Sahara desert camps and lifted house arrest on others, the Interior Ministry announced Wednesday.

A ministry statement did not say how many of the 781 people the government says it has been holding were released. Nor was it known how many people were under house arrest.

The only known case of house arrest was that of a senior official in the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). Rabuh Kebir, who is currently in exile in Germany. Other top FIS leaders are in prison.

The steps were among measures to be taken to promote favourable conditions for the success of a national conference on the political future, the ministry statement said.

"This decision falls within the beginning of conciliatory measures to help the national conference succeed," the statement said.

Earlier this month, the head of an Algerian human rights organisation said that there were about 780 fundamentalists held in the two camps of 'Ain M'guel and Oued Namous.

Algeria's authorities are organising a national conference on Jan. 25 and 26 to find a political consensus on who should govern the country for the next three years.

The authorities say they want Muslim fundamentalists to take part. The FIS took a huge first-round lead in Algeria's first multi-party elections at the end of 1991, but the authorities scrapped the poll and banned the FIS.

Earlier this week, the inde-

pendent Al Watan daily reported that some 50 people had been freed from a detention centre at 'Ain M'guel, where they were held for more than a year.

That move was announced last week by the spokesman of the National Dialogue Commission (CDN). Abdul Kader Ben Salah, at the behest of political parties due to gather for the conference.

The mandate of the current collegiate presidency, the High State Committee, expires on Jan. 31.

Some opposition parties have made their participation at the planned conference conditional on the direct or indirect participation of the FIS.

Others, however, say the FIS should not be allowed to take part, blaming it for the "terrorism" that has wracked Algeria for two years.

The top leaders of the FIS are either in exile or serving jail terms on conviction of inciting violence, undermining state security and related charges.

The president of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights, Abdul Nour Ali Yahia, put the number of detainees at almost 1,000.

Some 3,000 people have been killed in a guerrilla war and campaign of fear by extremists since the Jan. 1992 cancellation of the general election round of the FIS was poised to win.

Officials reported Wednesday that security forces had killed eight armed fundamentalist gunmen in several separate operations in the Algiers region and at 'Ain Delfa in the southwest on Monday and Tuesday.

A number of automatic weapons were recovered.

Clinton is in excellent health

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A routine physical exam Tuesday found President Bill Clinton in excellent health despite persistent allergy problems and a slightly elevated cholesterol level, the White House said.

Mr. Clinton even lost more than two kilos (five pounds) since the election campaign, weighing in at 95 kilos (210 pounds). "I feel great," the 47-year-old Clinton told reporters ahead of his 6½ hour exam at Bethesda Naval Hospital.

The checkup included a chest X-ray, hearing and vision tests, electrocardiogram, treadmill test and blood analysis. Mr. Clinton's cholesterol level was 204, slightly above the limit of the ideal range of 200, but below the level considered dangerous of 239. He also was advised to continue desensitisation injections for allergies to dust, pollen, cat dander and other allergens.

His weight was down from nearly 98 kilos (215 pounds) in October 1992 and was within the normal range for his height of 1.89 metres (6 feet 2½ inches). "The president is in excellent health with no indication of heart disease or other serious disorders," White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said.

French men's magazine Lui goes bust

PARIS (R) — Lui magazine, France's answer to Playboy, is shutting down after 30 years because of plunging sales, its publisher said. Lui (Him), which mixed photographs of naked women with weighty articles, succumbed to the circulation fall that has hit most men's magazines, an executive with Filipacchi Medias said.

Founded in 1963, Lui recently published a special 30th anniversary edition featuring sexy pictures of its most famous models including actresses Brigitte Bardot and Catherine Deneuve in younger days. Circulation fell to 70,000 in the first half of 1993 from more than 500,000 in the 1970s, the French daily Le Monde said. Originally a monthly, Lui switched to every two months last year. Officials from Filipacchi Medias, which publishes a stable of magazines including Elle, said the title would not be sold and the group was considering re-issuing Lui in a new format.

Cicciolina allowed to visit her son

NEW YORK (AFP) — A judge has ruled that porn star and former Italian deputy Ilona Staller, known as Cicciolina, may visit her son in New York despite objections by her estranged husband, her lawyer said. Her 14-month-old son was taken from Rome to New York by Ms. Staller's husband Maximilian Koons on Christmas Eve. Judge David Saxe ruled that Ms. Staller may visit her son for eight hours daily.

Staller and Mr. Koons, an American, separated in October, but decided differently two months later, saying that Ms. Staller had broken her promise to stop making pornographic films and was raising the child in unsuitable surroundings. He claimed to have found a vibrator among the child's playthings. Italian authorities refused his request to take custody of the boy. Mr. Koons has applied for a divorce and custody of the child. Ms. Warner said Mr. Koons was totally wrong about Ms. Staller's lifestyle.

Belgian 'killed' in Egypt reappears

BRUSSELS (R) — A Belgian tourist reported dead in a car accident in Egypt shocked mourning relatives when he telephoned them from Brussels Airport. Le Soir newspaper, which had announced Adrian Froyen's death Monday, said Tuesday the person identified as dead was in possession of Froyen's passport which had gone missing in a hotel in the Nile Valley town of Luxor.

When Froyen, 54, arrived back in Brussels Sunday his family had already started to arrange for the repatriation of the body and had begun funeral preparations. Le Soir said it was unclear who had died in the accident.

Saddam says disinformation used to justify Gulf war

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has accused the United States of using "lies" and disinformation to justify the war against Iraq after it invaded Kuwait.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said President Saddam made the charge in a speech to members of a European group supporting an end to sanctions against Iraq.

President Saddam mentioned the outcry which followed media reports that Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait had taken premature babies out of incubators and left them to die.

"These false reports," which were later proved to be wrong, served as a "pretext to declare war" and caused "casualties on all sides," he said.

The Iraqi leader urged members of the delegation to carry on "their attempts to correct European public opinion so the sacrifices of the war may

serve to stop the same mistakes happening again."

He accused the United States, without naming it, of "talking about democracy and human rights while at the same time cutting people's throats and leaving them to die of hunger."

INA did not mention the Security Council's decision Tuesday not to ease the sanctions imposed on Iraq in August 1990 on the grounds that Baghdad had still not met the conditions imposed by the U.N.

"We could have been their friends... but for that you have to be illiterate, neglect your own people, agree with everything they say and give them the lion's share of our resources while depositing our own share in Western banks," President Saddam said.

A British member of parliament (MP) from the opposition Labour Party told President Saddam that Western public opinion was turning on Iraq's side.

George Galloway, a vocal opponent of U.N. trade sanctions on Iraq was pictured with President Saddam on Iraqi television along with two Greek MPs from the ruling Pasok party after Tuesday's meeting.

"Sir, allow me to salute your courage, power and indefatigability," Mr. Galloway addressed President Saddam.

"I would like you to know that we are with you until Nasir (victory)..." Mr. Galloway said.

Panos Economides and Dimitrios Vounetos of Greek's parliament were also present. Mr. Galloway and the Greeks are part of a group set up in Athens last year to lobby for an easing or lifting of the U.N. embargo on Iraq.

Afrikaner threatens violence

PRETORIA (Agencies) — South African right-wing leader Constand Viljoen said Wednesday that conflict was looming and Afrikaners may need a "bit of violence" to carve out a homeland.

Mr. Viljoen, a former defence chief, said international mediation could help prevent trouble if talks between the right-wing, the government and the African National Congress (ANC), failed to yield results acceptable to white conservatives.

"The desire for self-determination we regard as freedom for the Afrikaner and... we ask our (Afrikaner) nation to authorise the executive body of the Afrikaner people's front (AVF) to achieve this desire of freedom in the most peaceful way possible," Mr.

Viljoen told reporters in Pretoria.

"(But) sometimes you have to use a little bit of violence to prevent further big violence and clashes, there is a clash looming in our country, there is a conflict looming," he said.

Mr. Viljoen is a key leader in the AVF, a member of the right-wing talks with the government and the ANC to press its demands for autonomy.

The statement was one of the few times right-wing leaders have threatened publicly to instigate violence against the government. In the past, they have warned of civil war under a black government but have insisted they would not be the ones to start the fighting.

Time is running out for Mr. Viljoen's Afrikaner Volksfront and its allies in the Freedom

Alliance to persuade the government and ANC to accept their demands.

The parties in the Freedom Alliance, ranging from the neo-Nazi whites to anti-ANC blacks, want constitutional guarantees of ethnically based homelands for their followers to avoid ANC domination after elections.

The ANC, the country's main black group, is expected to win the country's first multi-racial election April 27. The ANC says ethnic homelands would mark a return to apartheid.

ANC President Nelson Mandela called Mr. Viljoen's threat of violence "regrettable" but said he hoped an agreement could be reached to get dissent groups to take part in the election.

Reformists seek to amend Arafat constitution

By Sana Attiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Palestinian leaders demanding a more democratic decision-making process within the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), are preparing for national conferences to discuss amending a draft constitution for the Palestinian authority in an autonomous West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinian sources said Wednesday.

The conferences, due to be held in the occupied territories and Amman within two weeks, are expected to draw hundreds of Palestinian leaders representing different political factions, unions, chambers of industry and commerce in the West Bank and Gaza and experts in different fields, according to the sources.

The aim of the conferences, according to one of the organisers, Tayseer Arouri, is to hold in-depth discussions on the draft constitution and come out with recommendations for amendments to be submitted to the PLO leadership.

A committee representing the reformists, headed by Haidar Abdul Shafi, had discussed the draft constitution

with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat early this month. The reformists insisted on "democratising" the decision-making and delegating more authority to other Palestinian leaders.

During four meetings with the PLO chairman, the committee succeeded in convincing Mr. Arafat that the draft needed amendments.

Mr. Arouri said that the leadership also agreed to publish the draft, to be implemented during the interim period, and open it for discussion before referring it to the 107-member Palestine Central Council (PCCC).

"The aim is to engage in in-depth discussions of the draft constitution and recommend the appropriate amendments so that it does become a democratic constitution," Mr. Arouri told the Jordan Times in an interview.

He described the document as vague and insisted that contradictions existed between the jurisdictions of the chairman of the Executive Committee, the president of the elected Palestinian council in the autonomous areas and the president of the executive authority there.

"There are too many unclear articles in the constitution which need clearing up," Mr. Arouri stressed.

Another example of contradiction in the draft constitution which concerns Palestinian and international human rights organisations is in articles 11 and 59. While article 59 stipulates that "each person has the right to life and the death penalty is prohibited," article 11 states that "a death penalty will not be carried out except after the president's endorsement, and all such sentences will be presented to him by the president of the council (government) with a recommendation."

A footnote adds that "this article will be cancelled if the death penalty is cancelled."

The reformists — who include members of Mr. Arafat's mainstream Fatah movement, the Palestine People's Party (PPP) and Yasser Arafat Rabbo's Democratic Front (FIDA) in addition to independent personalities — are seeking to create a Palestinian constitution that would guarantee public freedoms and human rights.

body extraordinary jurisdiction to impose exceptions on laws that would guarantee human rights," said Mr. Arouri, a member of the reformist follow-up committee and member of the PPP.

He said the reformists would attempt to come up with an amended version of the draft document to "guarantee a state of law, a modern constitution that would qualify us to enter the 21st century."

The reformist movement, which began with a petition signed by 116 prominent Palestinian personalities, is also seeking to become a permanent body that would ensure continued democratisation within the PLO leadership. Mr. Arouri said that a permanent committee will be elected in a secret ballot soon, which would act as a body that would work towards "making the best of the (Sept. 13) declaration of principles (DoP)" between the PLO and Israel.

He added that much of the movement's activity was taking place in the occupied territories, headed by Dr. Abdul Shafi, and continued to draw more people to its fold.

"We are currently involved in intensive contacts with many intellectuals and leaders from different factions inside the occupied territories and in the diaspora," Mr. Arouri said. "We are working towards turning what we already have into a permanent democratic movement, perhaps a democratic bloc, which we expect would become a major pillar in the political Palestinian map."

The reformists also expect to attract different leaders from the opposition factions, such as Hamas and the Popular and Democratic fronts, "who do not agree with the unrealistic political slogans of torpedoing the peace talks," Mr. Arouri said, adding that there were such personalities in the opposition who seek to "make the DoP work in the best interests of the Palestinian people."

A number of opposition members were among those who signed the petition demanding reform, and a substantial number do not share their factions' views on trying to destroy a peaceful settlement in the occupied territories.

Delegation led

AMMAN (Petra) — A high-level delegation of Parliament Speaker Fawzi al-Fayez, who is on a visit to the first visit of the Jordanian and South African delegations to the Middle East, will leave for the South African Republic on Wednesday. The delegation is headed by Speaker Fawzi al-Fayez, who is accompanied by a number of State for Foreign Affairs officials.

Number 5

King,

Yemeni leaders affirm accord

Yemeni leaders affirmed a peace agreement reached between the warring factions in the country, according to a report from the capital, Sana'a.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Beedh have agreed to sign the agreement and where necessary, to form a committee to oversee the implementation of the agreement.

The agreement was reached after several rounds of talks between the warring factions, which have been ongoing for several months. The agreement is expected to bring an end to the conflict in the country.

The agreement is a significant step towards peace in the country, which has been plagued by conflict for several years. It is hoped that the agreement will lead to a more stable and peaceful future for the people of Yemen.

The agreement is a testament to the resilience and determination of the Yemeni people, who have sought peace and stability for so long. It is a source of pride for the entire nation.

The agreement is a landmark event in the history of Yemen, and it is hoped that it will serve as a model for other conflict-ridden regions in the world.

The agreement is a testament to the power of dialogue and negotiation, and it is hoped that it will inspire other people to seek peace through these means.

The agreement is a source of hope for the people of Yemen, who have longed for peace and stability. It is a testament to the power of the human spirit.

The agreement is a testament to the power of the human spirit, and it is hoped that it will inspire other people to seek peace through dialogue and negotiation.

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